DBS Offshore Wind

RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (West) Limited

RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (East) Limited

Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms

Natural England Statement of Common Ground Submission for Deadline 8

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Rev No.	Date	Status/Reason for Issue	Author	Checked by	Approved by
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Glossary

Term	Definition
Array Areas	The DBS East and DBS West offshore Array Areas, where the wind turbines, offshore platforms and array cables would be located. The Array Areas do not include the Offshore Export Cable Corridor or the Inter-Platform Cable Corridor within which no wind turbines are proposed. Each area is referred to separately as an Array Area.
Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA)	The assessment of the combined effect of the Projects in combination with the effects of a number of different (defined cumulative) schemes, on the same single receptor/resource.
Concurrent Scenario	A potential construction scenario for the Projects where DBS East and DBS West are both constructed at the same time.
Development Consent Order (DCO)	An order made under the Planning Act 2008 granting development consent for one or more Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A statutory process by which certain planned projects must be assessed before a formal decision to proceed can be made. It involves the collection and consideration of environmental information, which fulfils the assessment requirements of the EIA Directive and EIA Regulations, including the publication of an Environmental Statement (ES).
Environmental Statement (ES)	A document reporting the findings of the EIA and produced in accordance with the EIA Directive as transposed into UK law by the EIA Regulations.
Expert Topic Group (ETG)	A forum for targeted engagement with regulators and interested stakeholders through the EPP.
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	The process that determines whether or not a plan or project may have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European Site or European Offshore Marine Site.
Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD)	HDD is a trenchless technique to bring the offshore cables ashore at the landfall and can be used for crossing other obstacles such as roads, railways and watercourses onshore.
In Isolation Scenario	A potential construction scenario for one Project which includes either the DBS East or DBS West array, associated offshore and onshore cabling and only the eastern Onshore Converter Station within the Onshore Substation Zone and only the northern route of the onward cable route to the proposed Birkhill Wood National Grid Substation.
Inter-Platform Cables	Buried offshore cables which link offshore platforms.

Term	Definition
Landfall	The point on the coastline at which the Offshore Export Cables are brought onshore, connecting to the onshore cables at the Transition Joint Bay (TJB) above mean high water.
Landfall Zone	The generic term applied to the entire landfall area between Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS) and the Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) inclusive of all construction works, including the landfall compounds, Onshore Export Cable Corridor and intertidal working area including the Offshore Export Cables.
Local Authority	The Local Authority is a body empowered by law to exercise various statutory functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom. This includes County Councils, District Councils and the Broads Authority, as set out in Section 43 of the Planning Act 2008. East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) is the Local Authority for the entirety of the Onshore Development Area.
Mean High Water Springs (MHWS)	MHWS is the average of the heights of two successive high waters during a 24 hour period.
Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS)	MLWS is the average of the heights of two successive low waters during a 24 hour period.
Monitoring Area (MA)	The area around each pile location to be monitored in the pre-piling watch, and where possible during any breaks in piling or soft-start by either Marine Mammal Observers (MMObs) or Passive Acoustic Monitoring Operator (PAM-Op).
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)	Large scale development including power generating stations which requires development consent under the Planning Act 2008. An offshore wind farm project with a capacity of more than 100 MW constitutes an NSIP.
Offshore Converter Platforms (OCPs)	The OCPs are fixed structures located within the Array Areas that collect the AC power generated by the wind turbines and convert the power to DC, before transmission through the Offshore Export Cables to the Project's Onshore Grid Connection Points.
Offshore Export Cable Corridor	This is the area which will contain the offshore export cables between the Offshore Converter Platforms and Transition Joint Bays at the landfall.
Offshore Export Cables	The cables which would bring electricity from the offshore platforms to the Transition Joint Bays (TJBs).
Planning Inspectorate (PINS)	The agency responsible for operating the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

Term	Definition
Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)	Defined in the EIA Regulations as information referred to in part 1, Schedule 4 (information for inclusion in Environmental Statements) which has been compiled by the Applicants and is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development.
Project Change Request 1	The changes to the DCO application for the Projects set out in **Project Change Request 1 - Offshore & Intertidal Works** [AS-141] which was accepted into Examination on 21st January 2025.
Project Change Request 2	The changes to the DCO application for the Projects set out in **Project Change Request 2 - Onshore Substation Zone** [AS-152] which was accepted into Examination on 21st January 2025.
Scoping report	The report that was produced in order to request a Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State.
Scour protection	Protective materials to avoid sediment erosion from the base of the wind turbine foundations and offshore substation platform foundations due to water flow.
Sequential Scenario	A potential construction scenario for the Projects where DBS East and DBS West are constructed with a lag between the commencement of construction activities. Either Project could be built first.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Strictly protected sites designated pursuant to Article 3 of the Habitats Directive (via the Habitats Regulations) for habitats listed on Annex I and species listed on Annex II of the Directive
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Strictly protected sites designated pursuant to Article 4 of the Birds Directive (via the Habitats Regulations) for species listed on Annex I of the Directive and for regularly occurring migratory species
Statutory consultation	The statutory consultation ran in two periods. The first period ran between 6th June and 17th July 2023, with a second period running between 4th August and 15th September 2023 to gather responses from third parties missed during the initial consultation period. The PEIR was presented as part of this consultation.
Temporary Construction Compound	An area set aside to facilitate construction of the Projects. These will be located adjacent to the Onshore Export Cable Corridor and within the Onshore Substation Zone, with access to the highway.
The Applicants	The Applicants for the Projects are RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (East) Limited and RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (West)

Term	Definition
	Limited. The Applicants are themselves jointly owned by the RWE Group of companies (51% stake) and Masdar (49% stake).
The Projects	DBS East and DBS West (collectively referred to as the Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms).

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AEoI	Adverse Effect on Integrity
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
ANS	Artificial Nesting Sites
AoS	Areas of Search
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CBRA	Cable Burial Risk Assessment
CEA	Cumulative Effects Assessment
CGR	Counterfactual of population growth rate
CoCP	Code of Construction Practice
CPS	Counterfactual of population size
DAS	Discretionary Advice Service
DBS	Dogger Bank South
DCO	Development Consent Order
dML	deemed Marine Licence
DMV	Deserted Medieval Village
ECC	Export Cable Corridor
EDR	Effective Deterrent Range
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPP	Evidence Plan Process
ES	Environmental Statement
ESP	Electrical Switching Platform
ETG	Expert Topic Group

Acronym	Definition
ExA	Examining Authority
GBS	Gravity Based Structure
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
HHW	Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IPMP	In Principle Monitoring Plan
KSCP	Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MDS	Maximum Design Scenario
MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
MMObs	Marine Mammal Observers
MMMP	Marine Mammal Monitoring Protocol
MU	Management Unit
NAS	Noise Abatement Systems
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
ODOW	Outer Dowsing Offshore Windfarm
OECC	Offshore Export Cable Corridor
OOOMP	Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan
OWF	Offshore Wind Farms
PAM	Passive Acoustic Monitoring
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PINS	Planning Inspectorate

Acronym	Definition
PTS	Permanent Threshold Shift
PVA	Population Viability Analysis
RIAA	Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment
RLB	Red Line Boundary
RR	Relevant Representation
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SIP	Site Integrity Plan
SNCB	Statutory Nature Conservation Body
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TCC	Temporary Construction Compounds
UWN	Underwater Noise
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WCS	Worst Case Scenario
WR	Written Representations
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1. The Application is for development consent for the Applicants to construct and operate the proposed Projects under the Planning Act 2008. Further description of the Projects is available in **Chapter 5 Project Description** [REP7-032].

2. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (West) Ltd and RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (East) Ltd, ('the Applicants') and Natural England to set out the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two parties in relation to the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Dogger Bank South ('DBS') West Offshore Wind Farm and DBS East Offshore Wind Farm, collectively known as DBS Offshore Wind Farms (herein 'the Projects').

3. In drafting this SoCG, the Applicants have had regard to the Planning Act 2008 Guidance: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024).

4. The need for a SoCG between the Applicants and the Natural England has been set out within the Rule 6 letter issued by the Planning Inspectorate post-application of the Projects' DCO.

5. This SoCG is intended to provide the Examining Authority (ExA) with a clear summary of discussions between the parties and has been structured to reflect topics which are of interest to Natural England regarding the Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms DCO that has been submitted to the PINS pursuant to the Planning Act 2008.

6. It is the intention that this document will facilitate further discussions between the Applicants and Natural England and will provide the ExA with a clear overview of the level of common ground between both parties. This document has been updated throughout the Examination process.

7. The following application documents have informed the discussions with Natural England and address the elements of the Projects that may affect the interests of Natural England:

Table 1-1 Application Documents of interest to Natural England

Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter/ Application Document	PINS Reference
Deemed Marine Licences (within the Draft Development Consent Order)	APP-027 (superseded by Revision 10 – REP7-011)

Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter/ Application Document	PINS Reference
Commitments Register	APP-231 (superseded by Revision 3 – REP7-101)
Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOOMP)	APP-248 (superseded by Revision 3 - REP2-045)
Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment	APP-080 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP7-035)
Coastal Change Technical Note	AS-116
Stage 1 MCZ Assessment	APP-240 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP7-111)
Disposal Site Characterisation Report	APP-242 (superseded by Revision 4 – REP7-113)
Outline Scour Protection Plan	APP-251 (superseded by Revision 4 – REP6-045)
In Principle Monitoring Plan	APP-247 (superseded by Revision 5 – REP7-115)
Cable Statement	APP-244 (superseded by Revision 5 – REP6-043)
Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	APP-085 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP7-038)
Benthic Ecology Technical Note	AS-104 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP3-023)
Appendix 3 – Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan	APP-059 (superseded by Revision 4 – REP7-20)
Outline Dogger Bank Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan	APP-061
Annex C – Extension of the Dogger Bank SAC for the HRA Derogation Compensation – Rationale and Evidence Base	APP-062
Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology	APP-091 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP7-042)
Chapter 11 Marine Mammals	APP-095 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP7-045)
Appendix 11-3 Underwater Noise Modelling Report	APP-099 (superseded by Revision 2 - AS-137)
Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology	APP-103 (superseded by Revision 4 – REP6-015)

Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter/ Application Document	PINS Reference
Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 1 of 4 – Introduction and Terrestrial Ecology	APP-045 ((superseded by Revision 3 -REP5-007)
Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish	APP-046 (superseded by Revision 5 -REP7-016)
Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 3 of 4 – Annex II Marine Mammals	APP-047 (superseded by Revision 3 -REP5-009)
Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)	APP-048 (superseded by Revision 5 -REP6-008)
Appendix E - Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note	REP5-041 (superseded by Revision 2 -REP7-127)
Kittiwake Compensation (Appendix 1 – Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan)	APP-052 (superseded by Revision 6 – REP6-010)
Outline Kittiwake Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan	APP-054 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP4-022)
Appendix 2 – Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan	APP-058 (superseded by Revision 6 – REP6-012)
Outline Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan	APP-057 (superseded by Revision 2 – REP4-026)
Chapter 18 Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology	APP-140 (superseded by Revision 6 – REP7-064)

8. Natural England and the Applicants have been working together to minimise possible impacts of Natural England's operations, and so Natural England may influence and enhance the design of the Projects where appropriate.

1.2 Approach to SoCG

9. This SoCG has been developed during the pre-examination and Examination phases of the Projects. In accordance with discussions between the Applicants and Natural England, this SoCG is focused on matters of material interest and relevance to Natural England, namely matters covered in the Application Documents outlined in **Table 1-1** and related topics.

10. The structure of this SoCG is as follows:

- **Introduction**: background to the development of the SoCG.
- **Consultation and Engagement**: a summary of consultation and engagement with Natural England to date.
- **Agreement Log**: a record of the Applicants' position alongside Natural England's position. **Table 3-2** to **Table 3-10** sets out those areas agreed in relation to the application documents set out in **Table 1-1**.

11. It is agreed that this SoCG is an accurate description of the areas agreed, under discussion (post-Examination) and not agreed, between the parties, and that this SoCG accurately records key meetings and consultation with Natural England.

12. The ExA requires this document to be finalised at Deadline 8, however following the submission of updated ES Chapters at Deadline 7, Natural England have not had time to fully review all of the updated documents. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA where indicated in this document to potential further updates in Natural England's Deadline 9 submissions. This is noted in each point within the tables of section 3 where relevant.

2 Consultation and Engagement

2.1 Introduction

13. Natural England been consulted on the proposed development throughout the pre-application stage, having engaged in Marine Physical Environment, Benthic and Intertidal, Fish and Shellfish, Marine Mammals, Offshore Ornithology, and Terrestrial and Ornithology Expert Topic Group (ETG) meetings under the Evidence Plan Process, as well as via non-statutory and statutory consultation under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

2.2 Consultation and Engagement Summary

14. **Table 2-1** summarises the consultation that the Applicants have undertaken with Natural England as statutory or non-statutory consultation during the pre-application and post-application phases. In addition, a number of Technical Notes and draft documents have been issued throughout the pre-application stage of the Projects, for review and comments.

Table 2-1 Summary of pre-application and post-application consultation with Natural England

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
Pre – Application			
14/09/2021	ETG Meeting	Onshore Ecology and Ornithology Pre-Scoping	The following topics were discussed during the ETG: • Project Update; • The Evidence Plan Process (EPP); • Scoping Report and approach to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); and • Site Selection Methodology.
17/09/2021	ETG Meeting	Marine Mammal and Underwater Noise Pre-Scoping	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; • EPP; • Scoping Report and the approach to the EIA (offshore); and • Site Selection Methodology.
23/09/2021	ETG Meeting	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update;

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
		Pre-Scoping	• EPP; • Scoping Report and the approach to the EIA (offshore); and • Site Selection Methodology.
28/09/2021	ETG Meeting	Seabed Pre-Scoping	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; • EPP; • Scoping Report and the approach to the EIA (offshore); • Marine Physical Environment; • Benthic Habitat and Species; • Fish and Shellfish Ecology; • Approach to HRA; and • Site Selection Methodology.
13/10/2021	ETG Meeting	Offshore Ornithology Pre-Scoping	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; • EPP; • Scoping Report and the approach to the EIA (offshore); • Approach to HRA; and • Site selection methodology.
18/03/2022	Email	Onshore Ecology	Natural England responded to the issue of the Ecology Survey Method Statement with broad agreement. Advice was provided on Phase 2 species specific surveys.
04/05/2022	ETG Meeting	Site Selection	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Provide ETGs with a project update; and • Review the site selection work for Creyke Beck.
23/05/2022	ETG Meeting	Site Selection	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Provide ETGs with a project update; • Site selection work for Creyke Beck; and

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
			• Onshore Ecology Survey.
26/05/2022	ETG Meeting	Benthic / Marine Physical Processes Method Statements Discussion	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Benthic survey campaign methodology; • Marine physical processes assessment methodology; and • Methodology for both aspects of discussion.
24/06/2022	Email	Benthic Habitats / Marine Physical Environment	Natural England provided a response to the Benthic and Marine Physical Processes Method Statements issued in April 2022.
11/07/2022	Email	Onshore Ecology	Natural England provided a response to the updated Ecology Survey Method Statement.
29/07/2022	Email	Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Natural England provided a response to the Intertidal Method Statement. Royal HaskoningDHV confirmed survey will not take place within Withow Gap, Skipsea SSSI.
15/09/2022	ETG Meeting	HRA Update Meeting	Agenda • When the Applicants are intending to circulate draft screening to all stakeholders; • Intention for PEIR submission; • What we expect to use future engagement with stakeholders for; • Discussion of further engagement expected; and • Discussion of any relevant MCZs and how we intend to engage further on them.
26/09/2022	ETG Meeting	Site Selection – Geological Sites	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • The landfall options; and • Withow Gap Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
18/10/2022	Email	Site Selection	The Applicants provided Natural England with coastal erosion rates used to date.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
08/11/2022	Email	Landscape	Natural England confirmed that now the substation is 15km from the candidate AONB they no longer needed to be consulted on LVIA issues
09/12/2022	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Natural England provided a response to the Ornithology Method Statement
12/12/2022	Email	Site Selection	Natural England provided a list of sources relating to the SSSI and LGS at landfall.
15/12/2022	Email	Marine Physical Environment	Modelling note update was issued to Natural England.
13/01/2023	Email	Marine Physical Environment	Natural England provided early comments on the MPP update note.
20/01/2023	ETG Meeting	Marine Physical Environment – PEIR Approach	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Baseline environment characterisation; • Approach to coastal erosion assessment; • Marine Physical Processes Method Statement and applicability of Creyke Beck; and • Numerical Modelling to the Dogger Bank South Projects.
23/01/2023	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Royal HaskoningDHV issued written responses to Natural England comments on the Offshore Ornithology Method Statement.
07/02/2023	ETG Meeting	Offshore Ornithology – PEIR Approach	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; and • Summary of the baseline environment for offshore ornithology – following site-specific surveys.
07/02/2023	ETG Meeting	Benthic Habitats and Fish and Shellfish Ecology	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project update; • Baseline environment for the

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
		Seabed pre-PEIR	Benthic & Intertidal Ecology and Fish & Shellfish Ecology site-specific surveys undertaken in 2022; and • Impacts assessed for Benthic & Intertidal Ecology.
08/02/2023	Email	Marine Physical Environment	Discussion with Natural England regarding Natural England comments on the Projects updated MPP modelling note.
21/02/2023	ETG Meeting	Marine Mammals ETG – PEIR Approach	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project update; and • Summary on responses to: ○ Scoping comments, the site specific surveys undertaken to inform PEIR, the underwater; and ○ Noise modelling approach and a brief summary of sites screened in for HRA.
24/02/2023	Email	Marine Physical Environment	Natural England provided response to the Physical Environment modelling technical note and the comments provided by the Project following the ETG on 20th January 2023.
10/03/2023	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Natural England provided amendments to the offshore ornithology ETG minutes held on 7th February 2023.
15/03/2023	Email	Offshore Ornithology	The Applicants queried amendments made by Natural England to Offshore Ornithology ETG minutes regarding aerial survey data point and suggested change to text. Natural England agreed to amended text from email on 15th March 2023.
05/04/2023	Email	Marine Physical Environment	Email exchange clarifying that no updates since December 2022 had been made to 'Responses To Stakeholders Clarifications (004621981-02)'.
20/04/2023	ETG Meeting	Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology - Project Update,	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project update;

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
		Surveys, PEIR Assessment	• Site selection update; • Scoping Report status; • Ecological survey programme; • Desk study; • Habitat survey; • Wildlife surveys; • Assessment scenarios; • Ecology assessment; and • Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy.
09/05/2023	Email	Non-Kittiwake Compensation Call	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Discuss potential compensation measures for non-kittiwake species.
19/05/2023	Email	PEIR	PEIR Document Early access for Natural England.
06/06/2023	Email	General	Natural England provided with HRA Screening and MCZA Screening Reports.

29/06/2023	Meeting	Natural England Catch up call	Typical Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys
			• Natural England Update
			• AoB

11/09/2023	ETG Meeting	Marine Physical Processes	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting:
			• Project Update;
			• Marine Physical Processes Numerical
			• Modelling:
			  ○ Approach;
			  ○ Progress;
			  ○ Initial results; and
			  ○ Ongoing modelling.
			• PEIR responses.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
12/09/2023	Email	Export Cable Corridor and Site Selection Report	Issued a report on Offshore Export Cable Corridor & Landfall Site Selection, requesting comments by 10th October 2023.

14/09/2023	ETG Meeting	Marine Mammals	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting:
			• Project update;
			• Site selection;
			• Marine Mammals: PEIR comments and responses;
			• Updated underwater noise modelling;
			• Noise mitigation measures; and
			• Noise monitoring:
			  ○ Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA);
			  ○ Summary and next steps.

20/09/2023	Email	Dogger Bank South Offshore Export Cable Corridor and Landfall Site Selection Report	Issued GIS Shapefiles for Offshore Export Cable Corridor and landfall location.

21/09/2023	ETG Meeting	Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting:
			• Project Update:
			  ○ Benthic and Intertidal Ecology; and
			  ○ Review of PEIR Responses.
			• Marine Conservation Zone Area Considerations:
			  ○ Fish and Shellfish Ecology; and
			  ○ Herring and Sandeel PEIR Queries.
			• Other Related Queries.

03/11/2023	Email	S42 Feedback	Provision of Breeding Bird Survey information, Overwintering Bird Survey information and Habitat Survey Report information.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
13/11/2023	Email	Marine Mammals ETG Meeting	Natural England returned written response to the Marine Mammals Method Statement.
16/11/2023	S42 Meeting	S42 Feedback	Agenda • Introductions • DBS Project Update • Baseline Survey Results (relevant to S.42 Responses) • Review of NE S.42 Consultation Responses: • HRA and Functionally Linked Land • Geology and Land (including ALC) • Air Quality • AOB
17/11/2023	Email	DBS Stakeholder Engagement Tracker	Stakeholder Tracker issued to all concerned with confirmed ETG dates.
04/12/2023	Email	Investment partner	Informed Natural England of RWE's investment partner.
07/12/2023	ETG Meeting	Flood Risk & Geology	The following topics were discussed during the ETG: • Project design update; • Flood risk and hydrology – PEIR comments and ES updates; • Outline Drainage Strategy; and • Geology and Land Quality– PEIR comments and ES updates.
14/12/2023	ETG Meeting	PRoW & Access	The following topics were discussed during the ETG: • Project update; • Land Use assessment in relation to PRoW; • Tourism and Recreation Assessment in relation to PRoW; • Draft PRoWMP (issued in advance); and • S42 comments on PRoW.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
14/12/2023	ETG Meeting	Terrestrial Ecology	The following topics were discussed during the ETG: • Project overview; • Onshore updates; • PEIR responses; • Terrestrial Ecology baseline survey results; • Priority habitats; • ES progress; Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA); and • BNG update
15/12/2023	Email	Marine Mammals	Draft In Principle SIP, Draft Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol issued to consultees ahead of ETG on the 15th January 2024.
19/12/2023	Email	Overwintering Bird Survey Report	Provision of first 20 figures of the Overwintering Bird Survey Report to Natural England.

08/01/2024	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update; and
			• AoB

11/01/2024	Email	Overwintering Bird Survey Report	Responses to the Breeding Bird Survey Report, Functionally Linked Land Technical note and S.42 responses received from Natural England.

15/01/2024	ETG Meeting	Marine Mammals
		Pre-ES
			The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting:
			• Project Update;
			• Marine Mammals Update:
			  ○ Summary of densities;
			  ○ PIER comments;
			  ○ Significant impacts in the ES;
			  ○ Cumulative assessment and population modelling;
			  ○ Preliminary RIAA Assessment results;

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
			○ SIP; and ○ Marine Mammal Monitoring Protocol (MMMP). • In-Principle monitoring plan.
25/01/2024	Meeting	Pre-Application Steering Group Meeting	Meeting with the MMO, The Planning Inspectorate, Historic England, Natural England, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Environment Agency to discuss the following: • Programme for application; • Pre-application consultation programme: ○ Project programme (ETG topics, Auk compensation); and ○ RWE aims and expectations. • Stakeholder feedback on resourcing and any foreseeable issues; and • The Planning Inspectorates thoughts of 2024 examinations.
25/01/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Issued Natural England with a summary report detailing the collision and displacement numbers of key species that were used to inform the Offshore Ornithology ES chapter.
29/01/2024	ETG Meeting	Benthic Ecology / Physical Processes Pre-ES	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; • Physical Processes: ○ Modelling update; ○ Summary of construction impacts and model results; and ○ Summary of operation impacts. • Benthic and Intertidal Ecology: ○ Benthic Ecology Monitoring Survey Summary; ○ Impact results from the ES; and ○ Results from the CEA. • Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) conclusions.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
01/02/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Issued Natural England with draft versions of Appendices 12.9, 12.13 and other early modelling results following Natural England query on materials sent previously.
02/02/2024	Email	Marine Mammal ETG (15th January 2024)	Natural England returned Marine Mammal ETG, SIP and MMMP with their comments.
06/02/2024	ETG Meeting	Ornithology Pre-ES	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • DBS Project Update; • Discussion of key PEIR comments; • Presentation of preliminary ES results; and • Presentation of preliminary HRA results for project alone key SPAs.
12/02/2024	Email	Benthic Ecology / Physical Processes ETG Slide Pack	Comments received from Natural England on Marine Processes and Benthic Ecology ETG held on 29th January 2024.
16/02/2024	Email	Consultation Responses	Provision of responses to Natural England's questions on DCO documents, and request for further advice.

22/02/2024	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys
			• Natural England Update
			• AoB

23/02/2024	Email	Compensation Measures	Natural England issued link to latest Natural England advice on SEP / DEP compensation measures.
23/02/2024	ETG Meeting	Fish and Shellfish Pre-ES	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; • Draft Assessment Findings;

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
			• Potential Mitigation Options; and • PEIR Comments.
29/02/2024	ETG Meeting	Offshore Ornithology - Auks Compensation Meeting.	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project updates; • Long-list of measures for Auk species compensation; and • Next step.
04/03/2024	Email	Marine Mammal ETG Minutes	Comments received from Natural England on Marine Mammals ETG held on the 15th January 2024.
05/03/2024	Email	Benthic Ecology / Physical Processes ETG Minutes	Comments received from Natural England on Benthic Ecology and Marine Processes for ETG held on the 29th January 2024.
06/03/2024	Email	DAS/464359	Response from the Applicants to Natural England 's email on 2nd February 2024 with comments on Marine Mammal ETG, SIP and MMMP with their comments.
11/03/2024	Email	Terrestrial Ecology	Submission of the great crested newt district level licence application to Natural England
12/03/2024	Email	Natural England interim guidance on EIA offshore ornithology matters	Interim guidance received from Natural England on offshore ornithology issues for EIA scale impact assessments.
14/03/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Issued documents to Natural England presenting DBS of potential predator eradication options for the Projects.
19/03/2024	Email	DAS consultation	Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) advice received from Natural England on significant impacts in the RIAA.
19/03/2024	Email	Licences	Provision of additional information from Natural England regarding licences & LONIs.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
21/03/2024	Email	Fish & Shellfish ETG Slides	Natural England's comments on DBS Fish & Shellfish ETG on the 23rd February 2024.
28/03/2024	Email	General	Summarised recent catch-up call and issued draft list of DCO submission documents to Natural England.
03/04/2024	Email	Benthic Ecology / Physical Processes ETG Slide Pack	Further comments from Natural England received on Marine Physical processes and nearshore cable protection.
05/04/2024	Email	Air Quality	Issued Natural England with a technical note to their S.42 comments.
08/04/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Natural England provided a link to Hornsea 4 derogation information ahead of Auk Compensation Meeting.
10/04/2024	Meeting	Auk Second Compensation Meeting	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project updates; • Predator eradication / reduction; • Bycatch and Artificial Nesting Sites (ANS); and • Next steps.
11/04/2024	Meeting	Benthic Compensation	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project Update; • RIAA Conclusions; and • Compensation.
23/04/2024	Email	General	The Applicants provided Natural England with minutes from previous PINS Steering Group Meeting.
23/04/2024	Email	Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Natural England provided comments on the Benthic Compensation ETG held on 11th April 2024.
24/04/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Issued draft offshore ornithology appendices to Natural England.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
25/04/2024	Meeting	Kittiwake Compensation Meeting	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting: • Project updates; • Conclusions for FFC SPA Kittiwake; • Overview of the Approach to Compensation; and • Offshore ANS Proposal.
25/04/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Natural England provided comments on draft Auk Compensation Meeting held on 29th February 2024.
26/04/2024	Email	Onshore Ecology	Submission of signed copy of the provisional IACPC.
02/05/2024	Email	Fish & Shellfish ETG Minutes	Natural England provided comments on the DBS Fish & Shellfish ETG minutes from 23rd February 2024 received.
02/05/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Natural England provided comments on the second Auk Compensation Meeting held on 10th April 2024.
02/05/2024	Meeting	Onshore Air Quality Meeting	Natural England discussed the initial findings of the Air Quality impacts associated with the Projects. During which NE's request that the Applicants should model against NE's thresholds for impacts due to air emissions from traffic was discussed.
09/05/2024	Scoping Meeting	Onshore Ecology	Scoping call to discuss: • The background to the case. • The advice request. • The contract and indeed set-up, if it's something we can support you with. • What the contract could cover. • How the advice is to be provided. • The associated timescales and costs.
15/05/2024	Email	EPS Licensing	Discussion regarding PO uplift and review of the EPS licences.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
30/05/2024	Email	Offshore Ornithology	Natural England provided comments second Auk Compensation and Kittiwake Compensation meeting minutes.
Post – Application			
12/06/2024	Email	General	Confirmation of DCO submission on 12th June 2024.

27/06/2024	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update; and
			• AoB.

08/08/2024	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update; and
			• AoB.

10/09/2024	Email	Marine Physical Environment	The Applicants provided Natural England with Marine Physical Environment Agreement Log for comment.
12/09/2024	Email	Marine Mammals	The Applicants provided Natural England with Marine Mammals Agreement Log for comment.
12/09/2024	Email	Fish and Shellfish Ecology	The Applicants provided Natural England with Fish and Shellfish Ecology Agreement Log for comment.
13/09/2024	Email	Offshore Agreement Logs	Natural England noted they would not provide comments on the Agreement Logs and provided a copy of the Natural England Relevant Representation.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation

30/09/2024	ETG Meeting	Ornithology Compensation	The following topics were discussed during the ETG meeting:
			• Welcome and Introductions;
			• Kittiwake Compensation:
			  ○ Site selection update;
			  ○ Survey programme; and
			  ○ Next steps.
			• Auk Compensation:
			  ○ Site selection update; and
			  ○ Next steps.
			• Examination timetable; and
			• AOB.

03/10/2024	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update; and
			• AoB.

30/10/2024	Meeting	Air Quality Technical Note/Relevant Representation	The following topics were discussed during the meeting: • Welcome and Introductions; • Project Overview; • Development Consent Order Examination Timetable; • Air Quality Technical Note; • Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy; • Relevant Representation; and • AOB.
24/11/2024	Meeting	Auk Compensation	The following topics were discussed during the meeting: • Auk compensation options; • Isles of Scilly opportunity and routes to delivery; and • Project-led options.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation

05/12/2024	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update; and
			• AoB.

06/12/2024	Email	Kittiwake Compensation	Natural England provided feedback on ANS location.

23/01/2025	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update; and
			• AoB.

24/01/2025	Email	DCO / DML Queries	The Applicants emailed Natural England to invite them to a meeting with the MMO in order to discuss DCO / DML queries from the relevant representations (Meeting set for the 4th February 2025)
30/01/2025	Email	DCO / DML Queries	Natural England unfortunately had to decline the meeting and sent their apologies. The Applicants emailed the MMO and deferred discussions to a future date.
18/02/2025	Email	Commitments Register	The Applicants emailed Natural England an Excel version of the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] in order for them to use filters.

20/02/2025	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
			• Natural England Update: and • AoB.
20/02/2025	Email	Benthic Ecology Technical Note	The Applicants requested clarification on comments regarding the **Benthic Ecology Technical Note** [AS-104].
21/02/2025	Email	Benthic Ecology Technical Note	Natural England clarified a query on Benthic Ecology comments provided at Deadline 2.
17/03/2025	Email	Minutes	The Applicants' provided minutes for the meeting 20/02/2025.
20/03/2025	Email	Deadline 3	Natural England provided Deadline 3 documents and requested an unredacted version of the Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Site Refinement Report.
20/03/2025	Email	Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Site Refinement Report	Unredacted version of the Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Site Refinement Report sent to Natural England
15/04/2025	Email	ETG Meetings	The Applicants contacted Natural England to arrange ETG meetings for discussions on: • Prey Species; • Benthic Ecology; • Marine Physical Environment; and • Marine Mammals.

17/04/2025	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update: and
			• AoB.

01/05/2025	Email	Slide Packs	Slide packs were issued to Natural England in advance of the ETG meetings

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
07/05/2025	Meeting	DBS Marine Mammals, Ornithology and Prey Species Discussion	Meeting Agenda: • Marine Mammals - Discuss recent updates and submissions into Examination, latest updates on Defra Noise policy and monitoring plans • Offshore Ornithology – Discuss potential methodology for the assessment of auk abundance and displacement from between the Array Areas. • Prey Species – Discuss the Effect on Prey Species technical note issued at Deadline 4 and what further information could be presented on the topic.
08/05/2025	Meeting	DBS Benthic and Marine Process/Physical Environment Discussion	Meeting Agenda: • Marine Physical Environment – Discuss the preliminary results of the nearshore sediment modelling work to be submitted at Deadline 5 and Flamborough Front monitoring. • Benthic and Intertidal Ecology – Discuss the remaining issues regarding disturbance & recovery, halo effects and decommissioning. Discussion of the updates to documents submitted at Deadline 4.
20/05/2025	Email	Draft DCO	The Applicants approached Natural England for comment on text that had been requested by the MMO which would provide them the assurance that noise reduction methods would be used if required in required to mammals.
21/05/2025	Email	Draft DCO	Natural England confirmed they were happy for the text to go into the DCO but do not consider it sufficient to enable Natural England to rule out AEoI on any of the SACs listed as it does not secure the mitigation that would achieve this, only consideration of it (which could be decided against).
27/05/2025	Email	Deadline 5	Natural England provided Deadline 5 documents.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation

02/06/2025	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update: and
			• AoB.

02/06/2025	Email	DBS Marine Mammals, Ornithology and Prey Species Discussion	Draft minutes returned by Natural England with comments.
03/06/2025	Email	DBS Benthic and Marine Process/Physical Environment Discussion	Draft minutes sent by the Applicants for comment.
06/06/2025	Email	Fish & Shellfish Query	The Applicants queried a point raised in Natural England's Deadline 5 submission regarding the NSSS data availability.

09/06/2025	Meeting	Natural England Catch-up call	Meeting Agenda:
			• DBS Projects Update:
			  ○ Programme;
			  ○ Consultation; and
			  ○ Surveys.
			• Natural England Update: and
			AoB.

10/06/2025	Email	Fish & Shellfish Query	Natural England advised that the NSSS should not be used as a mapping layer, but instead interpreted as a separate data set.
16/06/2025	Email	Deadline 6	Natural England provided Deadline 6 documents.

Date	Form of Consultation	Meeting Title / Topic	Summary of Consultation
16/06/2025	Email	Draft SoCG	The Applicants sent the draft SoCG for Natural England to review.
20/06/2025	Email	MMMP Condition Wording	The Applicants provided updated wording for the marine mammal condition in the Draft DCO for agreement.
20/06/2025	Email	MMMP Condition Wording	Natural England confirmed the wording suggested for the marine mammal condition was sufficient to resolve the related issues at DL7.
20/06/2025	Email	Draft SoCG	The Applicants sent the draft SoCG (revised for Deadline 6) for Natural England to review.
24/06/2025	Email	Herring Restriction Condition Wording	The Applicants advised Natural England that they would be providing condition wording (on a without prejudice basis) in relation to herring restrictions for review.
24/06/2025	Email	Herring Restriction Condition Wording	Natural England confirmed that they would be able to review the condition wording within a short timeframe. Natural England confirmed that discussions with the MMO were underway regarding the wording.
25/06/2025	Email	Herring Restriction Condition Wording	The Applicants provided herring restriction condition wording (on a without prejudice basis) and a restriction plan to Natural England for review.
25/06/2025	Email	Herring Restriction Condition Wording	Natural England confirmed that they were happy with the wording of both proposed conditions.
01/07/2025	Meeting	Revised SoCG	Meeting to discuss the revised SoCG.
02/07/2025	Email	Revised SoCG	The Applicants sent the revised SoCG for Natural England's agreement.
03/07/2025	Email	Revised SoCG	Natural England agreed and signed Revision 3 of the SoCG

3 Agreement Log

3.1 Overview

15. The following sections of this SoCG summarise the level of agreement between the parties for each relevant onshore and offshore topics.

16. To easily identify whether a matter is 'agreed', 'not agreed' or 'under discussion', a colour coding system of, red, amber, green, is used respectively within the 'position status colour' column as set out in **Table 3-1.**

Table 3-1 Agreement logs position status key

Position Status	Position Status Colour
The matter is considered to be agreed between the parties.	Agreed
Natural England doesn't agree with the Applicants' position or approach and/or an issue has been largely, but not fully resolved. Natural England would ideally have liked this to be addressed but are satisfied that for this particular project it is unlikely to make a material difference to our advice or the outcome of the decision-making process. The matter is considered to be closed for the purposes of this SoCG.	Not Agreed – no material impact
Natural England does not agree with the Applicants' current position or approach and consider that this could make a material difference to the outcome of the decision-making process for this project. However, Natural England recognise this will be a point of continued discussion with the Applicants post-Examination.	Under discussion – material impact
Natural England considers that unless these issues are resolved it will have to advise that (in relation to any one of them, and as appropriate) it is not possible to ascertain beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not affect the integrity of an SAC/SPA/Ramsar and/or significantly hinder the conservation objectives of an MCZ and/or damage or destroy the interest features of a SSSI and/or comply fully with the Environmental Impact Assessment requirements.	Not agreed – material impact
Note for Examiners and/or competent authority. May relate to DCO/DML	

3.2 Development Consent Order

Table 3-2 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Development Consent Order

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix A - Development Consent Order	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
Development Consent Order				
A1	The definition of maintain should be amended to show a clear linking to the Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOOMP) or Environmental Statement. This comment applies to schedules 10-14 where similar provisions are recorded, for brevity have not repeated the comments (Article 1, Pg 8).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 3 No change. The Applicants do not consider that the definition of 'maintain' requires updating and states that key parameters related to maintenance activities will be included in the final OOOMP. We maintain our previous advice. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change.	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A4): Deadline 3 The Applicants are awaiting Natural England's response. However the Marine Management Organisation is content with the Applicants' explanation and require no further updates [AS-169]. Deadline 4 The Applicants responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:A1). Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131], the Applicants maintain their position as detailed at Deadline 4. End of Examination Position The Applicants note in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter was now agreed.	
A2	All references to Natural England should be replaced with 'the Relevant SNCB' (Article 1).	Deadline 1 Issue addressed. References to Natural England have been replaced throughout the DCO. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue addressed. References to Natural England have been replaced throughout the DCO.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
A3	Requirement 10 (2) lists the expected aspects to be detailed in the landscape management plan. We would note that the requirement for monitoring and maintaining of the landscaping	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 2.	Deadline 2 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants Response to Written Representations** [REP2-057]:	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix A - Development Consent Order	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	works should also be secured here. (Schedule 2, Part 1, Requirement 10).	Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Issue resolved. We are satisfied that Requirement 11 of the **Draft DCO (Revision 3)** [AS-121] provides that the landscaping works must then be carried out in accordance with any landscape management plan approved under requirement 10. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. We are satisfied that Requirement 11 of the Draft DCO [AS-121] provides that the landscaping works must then be carried out in accordance with any landscape management plan approved under requirement 10.	*'The **Draft DCO (Revision 5)** [REP1-004] Requirement 11 (Implementation and Maintenance of Landscaping) was updated at Deadline 1 to secure the long-term management of landscaping works at the Onshore Converter Stations site'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
A4	The requirement wording should be updated to state which environmental topics will be included within the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP). Paragraph (4) should be amended to note that the relevant SNCB will be consulted by the relevant planning authority prior to the approval of any pre-commencement screening and fencing works. The production of the final soil management plan is not secured in the DCO wording. We advise this could be included within this requirement (Schedule 2, Part 1, Req. 19).	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Issue progressed. We maintain our advice that environmental topics that are included in the CoCP should be listed. Regarding our advice that paragraph (4) be amended, we believe that this has been added into **Draft DCO (Revision 3)** [AS-121] under paragraph (5) (Schedule 2, Part 1, Requirement 19) rather than (4) however it may also be covered by paragraph (1). We request that the Applicants provide clarification on whether this is correct. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline Deadline 5	The Applicants provided a response to Natural England in the Applicants' **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039:A7), which stated: *'The Applicants do not agree that there is a need to list the different environmental topics that will be included within any final Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) in requirement 19 of the **Draft DCO** [APP-027]. The Outline Code of Construction Practice (OCoCP) [APP-234] includes construction mitigation from all onshore ES Chapters 18 to 30 [APP-140 to APP-225]. Section 5 sets out the general site operation measures and section 6 the management of onshore environmental issues for each of the relevant environmental topics.* *Table 3-1 of the OCoCP [APP-234] also describes the outline documents that form appendices to the OCoCP [APP-234]. Because any final CoCP submitted and approved under requirement 19 must accord with the OCoCP [APP-234], it is implicit that the listed documents in Table 3-1 and environmental topics included in section 6 of the OCoCP [APP-234] will also be included within or, appended to any final CoCP. It is therefore not necessary to update the wording of requirement 19.* *The Applicants note Natural England's request to be included as a consultee in requirement 19(4) of the **Draft DCO** [APP-027] and will make this amendment in the **Draft DCO** [APP-027].'* Deadline 4 In relation to Natural England's request for environmental topics to be listed in requirement 19, the Applicants maintain their position set out in the previous response above. The Applicants have updated the **Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (Revision 7)** [REP4-005] to add Natural England as a consultee to requirement 19(4) and note that they had incorrectly been added to 19(5) previously (which has now been corrected).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix A - Development Consent Order	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue progressed. We maintain our advice that environmental topics that are included in the CoCP should be listed. We welcome the amendment to the Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (Revision 7) [REP4-006] to Schedule 2, Part 1, Requirement 19(4) to include consultation with the relevant SNCB. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant maintains their position [REP6-052] that they do not agree that there is a need to list the different environmental topics that will be included within any final Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) within draft DCO requirements. We maintain our previous advice.	Deadline 5 The Applicants maintain their position on this as set out in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] noted above. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131], the Applicants maintain their position as detailed in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048]. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as detailed in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] noted above. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact'.	
A5	Regarding the commitment to secure Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for this project, there is a need to secure the BNG for a minimum of 30 years, which should be reflected in the DCO wording. We also encourage the delivery of minimum 10% BNG to be secured in the DCO wording (Schedule 2, Part 1, Req.32).	Deadline 1 The Applicants considers that as detail of the minimum 30 year period will be included in the BNG Strategy that it is unnecessary to include within the DCO. They also disagree with committing to the recommended minimum 10% of BNG. Natural England maintains our advice, however as BNG is not yet mandatory for NSIPs we will not pursue this issue further. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position The Applicant considers that as detail of the minimum 30 year period will be included in the BNG Strategy that it is unnecessary to include within the DCO. They also disagree with committing to the recommended minimum 10% of BNG. Natural England maintains our advice, however as BNG is not yet mandatory for NSIPs we will not pursue this issue further.	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A8): *'The Applicants confirm that, as per paragraph 130 of the Outline **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Strategy** [APP-157], the final BNG Strategy, which must be submitted and approved in accordance with requirement 32 of the **Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP-027], will include:* • *A finalised metric calculation to assess the on-site net change in biodiversity and the requirements to deliver a net gain;* • *Details of the on-site and off-site measures to deliver no net loss, or where possible a net gain; and* • *Details of how compensation will be legally secured, managed and monitored for a minimum 30 year period.* *The Applicants do not believe it is necessary to update the wording of requirement 32 when this detail is already included in the **Outline BNG Strategy** [APP-157], with which the final BNG Strategy must accord.* *The Applicants acknowledge the recommendation to aim for a 10% BNG. Although there is no legal requirement for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) at present to achieve this, the Applicants will seek to achieve a net gain where possible, when preparing the final BNG Strategy and have committed to no net loss'.*	
A6	Points A10 - A15 (RR ref) apply to Schedules 10 -14 where similar conditions apply.	End of Examination Position Points A10 - A15 (RR ref) apply to Schedules 10 -14 where similar conditions apply.	N/A	
A7	This condition does not include the requirement to submit an updated OOOMP. We also note that	Deadline 1	The Applicants provided a response to Natural England in the **Applicants' Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039:A10), which stated:	

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	condition 10 (1) (c) requires details on cable protection. However, we assume this covers during construction cable protection only. We further note that operations and maintenance is provisioned for at condition 7. However, the wording at condition 7 only allows for the replenishment of cable protection. Natural England interprets this to mean the deemed Marine Licence (dML) only allows for new areas of cable protection to be installed during construction. Confirmation is needed of the intention with regard to the conditioning of cable protection deployment after construction. (Schedule 10, 15(1))	Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Issue progressed. We welcome the inclusion in Schedule 10, part 2, condition 7 (6) of the **Draft DCO (Revision 03)** [AS-121] that the offshore operations and maintenance plan is to be submitted at least 4 months prior to operation. This part of the issue is resolved. However, see Point A15 with regards to additional or replenishment cable protection. Deadline 4 See Point A15 with regards to additional or replenishment cable protection. Deadline 5 No change - we maintain our previous advice. Please see Point A15 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - we maintain our previous advice. Please see Point A15 for further detail. Deadline 7 See Point A15 with regards to additional or replenishment cable protection.	*'Condition 7(3) of DML1 at Schedule 10 of the **Draft DCO** [APP-027] requires the submission and approval by the MMO of an Offshore Operations and Management Plan, which must be substantially in accordance with the **Outline Offshore Operations and Management Plan** [APP-248]. The Applicants note that "Management" should be amended to "Maintenance" in this condition to reflect the title of the document and will make this amendment to the **Draft DCO** [APP-027]. As this plan is secured in Condition 7, there is no need for it to also be secured in Condition 15.* *Natural England's comment refers to cable protection being required in accordance with Condition 10(1)(c) – we assume this is meant to be a reference to Condition 15(1)(c). The Applicants can confirm that, other than in areas of existing cable protection, no new cable protection will be installed during the operation and decommissioning of the Projects without the acquisition of additional marine licences. Please see the response to RR-039: A3 for further detail.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's confirmation that part of this concern has been resolved. In relation to additional or replenishment cable protection, please see the response to A15 below. Deadline 5 See the response provided at Deadline 5 to A15. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: A7): *'The requirement to submit an OOMP (which must be in accordance with the Outline OOMP is secured by condition 7(3) of DML1 (and equivalent conditions in the other DMLs) and therefore does not also need to be secured in condition 15.* *Table 2-3 of the **Outline OOMP** [REP2-045] is clear that any new cable protection during operation, including at new locations, would require a new Marine Licence. Replacement or addition to cable protection during operation in the same area as cable protection has been installed during construction (up to the limits set out for the Projects as a whole) would be undertaken under the DMLs in accordance with condition 7 of DML1 (and equivalent conditions in the other DMLs) and would not require a new Marine Licence.'* Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
A8	Amend condition to include consideration of the use of Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) within the final Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (MMMP). (Schedule 10, 15(1)(g)).	Deadline 1 The Defra Marine Noise Policy paper was published on 21st January 2025. Natural England is reviewing this in terms of what it means for our advice on this project. We will provide further comment at Deadline 2, in the interim please see section 7 of our Deadline 1 cover letter.	The Applicants responded to this point in **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A11): Deadline 2 The Applicants responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-063:7). Deadline 4	

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		Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 No change. Natural England's advice remains that The Applicants should be committing to using Noise Abatement Systems at this stage in the application. See Point F6 and Appendix F3 of our Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change - we maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 No change – we maintain our previous advice. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to this condition to be submitted in the DCO at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional mitigation. We note that recommended wording for this condition has also been included in The ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft DCO [PD-028], which we consider would also be sufficient to address our concerns.	As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (see point REP3-054:1.1): *"The Applicants have committed to utilising best endeavours to deliver noise reduction (primary and /or secondary methods) in line with the Department for Environmental Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Policy Paper on Reducing Marine Noise as part of Defra's Marine Noise Package (20252). The additional mitigation measures are presented in section 3.1.9 of the Outline MMMP (Revision 3) [REP2-047] and consider the use of Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) as mitigation for underwater noise. Any additional mitigation will be dependent on the final project design and determined at the post-consent stage.* *The Applicants have submitted a technical note at Deadline 4 (Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note [document reference 14.9]) presenting predicted impact ranges from Appendix 11-3 Underwater Noise Modelling Report (Revision 2) [AS-137] using a 10dB noise reduction. Examples of types of noise reduction methods such as NAS are presented in the technical note, as the Applicants are including NAS within the Projects' procurement strategy to allow it to be called upon should it be required based on the final design parameters. With a 10dB noise reduction, the worst case predicted cumulative Sound Exposure Level SEL_{cum} PTS impact ranges for harbour porpoise would be reduced from 11km to 0.98km for two sequential monopiles.* *The Applicants welcome engagement with Natural England post-consent to ensure the most appropriate mitigation is implemented."* *The Applicants also note that, in the event that driven or part-driven foundations are proposed to be used, the production, submission and approval of the MMMP in advance of construction is secured by conditions 15/13 of DMLs 1, 2, 3 and 4. The MMMP must be in accordance with the outline MMMP (which commits to the use of best endeavours to deliver noise reduction (primary and /or secondary methods) in line with the Defra Policy Paper on Reducing Marine Noise) and must follow best practice, as advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies. Natural England is a consultee in relation to the relevant DML conditions. Sufficient controls therefore already exist to ensure the Applicants provide adequate noise mitigation and no amendments to the condition wording are proposed. The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions'.* Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: A8): *'The Applicants have agreed wording with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 respectively for a condition in the relevant DMLs that secures the use of primary and / or secondary mitigation measures to ensure that no Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEoI) for marine mammals arises as a result of the noise from piling activities. This wording has been included in the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1].'*	
A9	Include a condition to secure the maximum hammer energy for piling of monopiles and pin piles (Schedule 10, Part 2).	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have included maximum hammer energy for piling of monopiles	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

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		(6,000kJ) and pin piles (3,000KJ) in Schedule 10, Part 2, Condition 15 (7), pg 124; Schedule 11, Part 2 Condition 15 (7) (pg 148); Schedule 12, Part 2, Condition 13 (10) (pg 174); Schedule 13, Part 2, Condition 13 (10) (pg 199).		
A10	Amend the condition such that the Site Integrity Plan for piling must be submitted no later than 6 months prior and no sooner than 9 months prior to piling. (Schedule 10, 16(3)).	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. Natural England welcome the update that the SIP will be submitted no later than six months prior to the commencement of piling. We continue to advise it is submitted no sooner than nine months prior to piling. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. We continue to advise the SIP is submitted no sooner than nine months prior to piling. Deadline 5 & 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change. However, we note that this has been recommended within The ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft DCO [PD-028], which is welcome.	The Applicants have responded to this point in in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A13): '*The Applicants have agreed in the response to the MMO's relevant representation (see section 4.6, I.D. 79 of Table 4.6.2 of* '***The Applicants' Responses to Relevant Representations*** *[PDA013]) that the DMLs will be updated so that the Site Integrity Plan (SIP) must be submitted no later than six months prior to the commencement of piling. The Applicants note Natural England's additional request that the SIP should be submitted no sooner than nine months prior to piling (in addition to no later than six months). The Applicants do not agree that this restriction is necessary or proportionate as it is possible that piling programmes will be known in sufficient detail more than nine months in advance of the start of piling operations'.* Deadline 2 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058]: '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment. The Applicants have updated the relevant conditions in the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 5)*** *[REP1-004] so that the SIP must be submitted no later than six months prior to the commencement of piling. The Applicants note Natural England's additional request that the SIP should be submitted no sooner than nine months prior to piling (in addition to no later than six months). The Applicants do not agree that this restriction is necessary or proportionate as it is possible that piling programmes will be known in sufficient detail more than nine months in advance of the start of piling operations, and note this requirement could directly impact the delivery programme of the Projects, therefore potentially impacting government policy regarding the significant and urgent need for new renewable energy generation (see as an example NPS EN-1 at 3.1.1).*' Deadline 5 The Applicants maintain the position as stated at Deadline 2, above. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: A10): '*As per condition 16 of DML1 (and equivalent conditions in the other DMLs), the Site Integrity Plan (SIP) must be submitted for approval no later than 6 months prior to the commencement of piling activities. However, the Applicants do not agree that the 9 month restriction is necessary or proportionate as it is possible that piling programmes will be known in sufficient detail more than 9 months in advance of piling operations. The Applicants are aware that it has taken other Projects approximately 12 months to receive SIP approval following submission, demonstrating that piling programmes can be known in sufficient detail more than 9 months prior to piling and that an earlier submission is reasonable to avoid costly*	

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			delays to construction programme that could arise if the Applicants are restricted to a 9 month submission. Therefore, the Applicants do not consider it to be reasonable to restrict the submission of the SIP in such a way.' End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as detailed in **The Applicants' Comments on the ExA's Proposed Schedule of Changes to the dDCO** [REP7-130]: *'The Applicants do not agree that the 9 month restriction is necessary or proportionate as it is possible that piling programmes will be known in sufficient detail more than 9 months in advance of piling operations. The Applicants are aware that it has taken other Projects approximately 12 months to receive SIP approval following submission, demonstrating that piling programmes can be known in sufficient detail more than 9 months prior to piling and that an earlier submission is reasonable to avoid costly delays to construction programme that could arise if the Applicants are restricted to a 9 month submission. Therefore, the Applicants do not consider it to be reasonable to restrict the submission of the SIP in such a way and do not propose to update the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1].'* Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-Examination with Natural England.	
A11	This condition provides that most of the plans and documents under Condition 15 must be submitted 4 months prior to the works starting. Due to the size and complexity of this project, this time period is not appropriate. Given the large volume of documentation and the often complex nature, we request this be amended to six months prior to commencement. Alternatively, we are willing to discuss the required timing for each plan with the Applicants and the MMO. (Schedule 10, Part 2, 17(1)).	Deadline 1 Natural England maintain that due to the increasing complexity of construction of large offshore works, six months is now considered an appropriate period for approval of pre-construction documentation and agreement of documents. And in some instances where high risks issues remain unresolved post consent, longer may be required. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. Natural England notes and welcomes the increase in consultation period on pre-construction documentation from four months to six months.	The Applicants responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A14). Deadline 2 The Applicants responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-067: A11). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
A12	Update the conditions to include ornithological monitoring. Further amendments may be required on monitoring condition wording in line with MMO advice. (Schedule 10, 20-22).	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A15): *'The Applicants disagree that there is a need for a specific ornithological monitoring condition in the DML as this is already secured through the submission and approval of the construction programme and monitoring plan under the relevant conditions of the DMLs (**Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP027])*	

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		No change Deadline 3 No change. Natural England does not consider the Construction Programme and Monitoring Plan to be sufficient to secure the necessary monitoring plans. We advise that each thematic area should be named and secured by condition. For DBS this should include monitoring plans for ornithology, benthic, marine processes, marine mammals, and sandeel. Plans should be provided least 4 months (though preferably 6) prior to the first survey. We highlight that this is a standard position and has been standard wording in DCOs since 2010. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. We welcome the inclusion of ornithological monitoring as outlined in [REP3-005] and [REP3-007]. Please see Table 1 of our Appendix J [REP3-056] submitted at Deadline 3 for further detail on monitoring. Deadline 5 & 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change.	*(Conditions 15(1)(b), 20, 21 and 22 of DMLs 1 and 2; Conditions 13(1)(b), 18, 19 and 20 of DMLs 3 and 4; and Conditions 11(1)(b), 14, 15 and 16 of DML 5). The construction programme and monitoring plan must accord with the* ***In-Principle Monitoring Plan*** *[APP-247], which includes (at section 1.6.7) outlines of the in-principle monitoring proposed in relation to offshore ornithology. The construction programme and monitoring plan must be submitted to and approved by the MMO'.* Deadline 4 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:A12): *'The Applicants have previously added a standalone ornithological monitoring condition to the DMLs (condition 29 of DMLs 1 and 2) and so hope that this matter is now resolved'.* Deadline 5 See the Applicants' responses to Appendix J - Natural England's comments on the In-Principle Monitoring Plan [REP3-056] in Table 2-15 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents** [REP4-088], submitted at Deadline 4. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: A12): *'Condition 29 in DML1 (and equivalent conditions in other DMLs) has been added specifically to deal with ornithological monitoring. The Applicants have not received any comments on the condition wording from the MMO or Natural England. This amendment was made to the Draft DCO at Deadline 3 and feedback has been awaited since this time.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants have updated the **IPMP (Revision 5)** [document reference: 8.23] to provide further details on content of the ornithological monitoring plan as provided in the ExA's recommended condition wording at Deadline 7. No further specific ornithology monitoring conditions have been added to the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [REP7-011], see **The Applicants' Comments on the ExA's Proposed Schedule of Changes to the dDCO** [REP7-130] (specifically those for Schedule 10 DML1; Part 2, 29(4) and Schedule 11 DML2 - Part 2, 29(4)) for further details. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that review of the updated **IPMP (Revision 5)** [REP7-115] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
A13	Schedule 12 It is outlined for Pre-construction plans and documentation under Part 2, Condition 13 (1) (a) (v) of that "any exclusion zones or micro-siting	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have updated the errors in cross-referencing in the DCO.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

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	requirements identified pursuant to 13(1)(f)(v) or relating to any habitats of principal importance identified as part of surveys undertaken in accordance with condition 19"; However, 13(1)(f)(v) does not exist. Furthermore, Condition 19 relates to Construction monitoring surveys, not pre-construction surveys (18)(4)(a). Schedule 13 Similar to above, it is outlined under Part 1 Condition 13 (1) (a) (v) that "any exclusion zones or micro-siting requirements identified pursuant to 14(1)(f)(v) or relating to any habitats of principal importance identified as part of surveys undertaken in accordance with condition 18"; However, 14(1)(f)(v) does not exist. Furthermore, Condition 18 relates to Construction monitoring surveys, not pre-construction surveys (18)(4)(a). Amend errors in Schedules 12 and 13 as needed.			
A14	The Maximum Design Parameters for the number of piles that can be installed per day (including simultaneously and concurrently) have not been secured in the DCO/dML. A condition should be included to secure these.	Deadline 1 Natural England welcomes that a condition has been added to the DCO and will be providing comments at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Natural England will provide further comment on this condition at Deadline 4. Deadline 4 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England are satisfied that the condition wording captures the WCS as assessed in the original ES, which was then reduced as a result of the Change Request.	In the **Applicants' Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A18), the stated they would make appropriate updates to the DMLs to reflect the comments made by Natural England. Deadline 3 The Applicants have updated the **Draft DCO (Revision 6)** [REP3-004] to highlight the change in the number of piles. Deadline 5 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
A15	The consent allows for deployment of cable protection but has no end date for such deployment. Include a condition limiting the	Deadline 1	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A3).	

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	deployment of cable protection outside of designated sites to within 10 years of the completion of construction and inside designated sites such as Dogger Bank SAC, no cable protection may be deployed after the completion of construction. Agreement should also be sought on what is meant by completion of construction.	Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Issue progressed. We welcome the update to the OOOMP [AS-028] that a separate Marine Licence will be sought during operation for new cable and scour protection (i.e. in areas where no protection was installed during construction). We do not agree with the Applicants' position that ""no new marine licences will be sought for any additional or replenishment protection required during the operational phase in areas that were protected as part of construction, unless such protection would exceed the maximum amounts authorised by the DMLs. See Appendix C2.2 [REP2-066] of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. The Applicants states that the cable and scour protection reports would delineate the end of construction and that relevant DML conditions would be updated. We will provide further comment when these updates are provided. Deadline 4 No change. It is outlined in the Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents [REP3-028] that their position remains unchanged, whereby replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DCO could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding additional and replenishment of cable / scour	*'In the Applicants' response to the MMO's relevant representation (see section 4.6 of **The Applicant's Responses to Relevant Representations** [PDA-013]), the Applicants confirmed that the **Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOOMP)** [APP-248] will be updated to clarify that a separate marine licence, or licences, will be sought during operation for the deposit of new cable and scour protection (i.e. in areas where no protection was installed during construction). It is envisaged that these applications would cover 10 year periods post-construction. For clarity, it is intended that no new marine licences will be sought for any additional or replenishment protection required during the operational phase in areas that were protected as part of construction, unless such protection would exceed the maximum amounts authorised by the DMLs.* *The Applicants are of the opinion that a distinction should not be drawn in protection maintenance licencing terms between areas within or beyond any Marine Protected Areas as long as any future protection levels fall below the worst case scenario levels assessed within the Environmental Statement (ES) and the Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA). The impacts of this protection will be compensated for as part of the Dogger Bank (DBS) South benthic Special Area of Conservation (SAC) compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect and compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process and further assessment and compensation discussions would be neither proportionate or necessary. If additional cable protection for maintenance purposes was required beyond the maximum limits authorised by the DMLs then a separate marine licence or licences would be required.* *Each DML includes a condition relating to the production of cable and scour (if appropriate) reports at the end of construction. In fulfilment of this condition the Applicants must provide a report detailing where protection was laid during the construction campaign. The details presented in these reports would delineate the end of the construction period from a cable and scour protection perspective. Additional wording will be added to the relevant DML conditions requiring these reports to be updated where replenishment protection is deposited during the operational period.'* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-065:6), *'The Applicants' position remains that replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DMLs could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. These footprints would be established through the discharge of the Reporting of Scour and Cable Protection conditions in each DML (for example, see Condition 23 in DML 1 (Schedule 10) within the **Draft DCO (Revision 6)** [document reference 3.1]) with the volumes of deposition also managed through these conditions. The effects of protection introduced through this mechanism will be compensated for as part of the DBS benthic SAC compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process. The Applicants maintain that further assessment and compensation discussions relating to project activities that have been previously assessed, licenced and compensated for would be neither proportionate or necessary.*	

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		protection and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at Deadline 6. Please see Appendix K5 of Natural England's response to ExQ2 MCP.2.10 in our Deadline 5 submission for further detail Deadline 6 We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding additional and replenishment of cable / scour protection and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at Deadline 6. Please see Appendix K5 of Natural England's response to ExQ2 MCP.2.10 in our Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change. However, we note that within The ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft DCO [PD-028], the ExA has recommended the following additions for cable protection: "*(g) Cable protection replenishment outside European marine designated sites with benthic habitats as qualifying features for a maximum period of ten years post construction;*	*The Applicants reiterate that protection required in 'new areas' where no protection had previously been placed, would be licenced in ten year blocks following the completion of construction. This will help to ensure management of impacts whilst preserving the flexibility that the Applicants require in order to adequately maintain and operate a complex asset in a dynamic environment. Please see the Applicants' response to RR-039: C13 in* ***Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations*** *[AS-048] for the full proposal.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants maintain their position as provided at Deadline 3 above. However, as stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]: *'The Applicants are seeking meetings with Natural England between Deadlines 4 and 5 to discuss a number of technical issues. This matter will be on the agenda with the intention of moving the Applicants' and Natural England's positions into closer alignment.* *The Applicants confirm that condition 23 of DMLs 1 and 2, condition 21 of DMLs 3 and 4 and condition 17 of DML5 all contain provisions requiring cable and scour protection reports to be provided within 4 months following completion of construction of the authorised scheme, with updates provided where further deposits are made through the processes outlined within the* ***Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (Revision 3)*** *[REP2-045] occur during the operational phases of the Projects. The Applicants are unclear as to the nature of any further updates that Natural England are expecting for these conditions and would appreciate clarification in this regard.'* Deadline 5 During a meeting held with Natural England on 8th May 2025, Natural England confirmed they will provide further clarification on their position on the licensing of cable / scour protection measures post-construction for the Applicants to consider. Until further clarification is received, the Applicants maintain their previous position on this matter as detailed in the response provided at Deadline 2, above. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-053:5.3): *'The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment, although it is unclear what is meant by the "spirit" of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. The Applicants note that their response to question BE.2.10 in* ***The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)*** *[REP5-036] provides a clear illustration of how their position accords with the relevant decommissioning guidelines for offshore renewable energy projects that have been provided by Government in the form of Decommissioning of offshore renewable energy installations under the Energy Act 2004: guidance notes for industry (2019).* *The Applicants will note in both the* ***Cable Statement (Revision 4)*** *[REP4-050] and* ***Outline Scour Protection Plan (Revision 3)*** *[REP2-051] that an assessment of the benefits and drawbacks of different*	

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		(7) No cable protection can be replenished within European marine designated sites with benthic habitats as qualifying features unless otherwise agreed in writing by the MMO in consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation body and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. *(8) The undertaker is not required to comply with sub-paragraph (7) in a case of emergency*." Natural England welcome article (g), however, we advise that for (7), replenishment of cable protection should be subject to a new Marine Licence. See Appendix O7 of Natural England's Deadline 7 submission for further detail.	*scour and cable protection solutions considered for use will form part of the Decommissioning Programme. This assessment will include consideration of removability and other characteristics relevant to the mitigation hierarchy. The updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [document reference 8.20] has been submitted at Deadline 6.'* <u>Deadline 7</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-073:C3): '*The Applicants note that in the Final Cable Statement(s), required to be submitted for decision-maker approval prior to the commencement of construction under each Deemed Marine Licence (e.g. Condition 15(1)(i) of the **Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1], the final cable protection and dredging requirements will be presented, with full technical justifications. This same document will demonstrate how the use of cable protection and dredge volumes has been minimised, in accordance with mitigation presented in the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043). The Applicants note that, as is established practice for offshore wind projects where significant design uncertainties remain at the consent application stage, they have submitted a design envelope for consent. This approach has been adopted in accordance with the principles laid out in policies such as 2.6 of National Policy Statement EN-3.'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants maintain their position as detailed in **The Applicants' Comments on the ExA's Proposed Schedule of Changes to the dDCO** [REP7-130]: *'The Applicants are of the opinion that this amendment is unnecessary and do not propose to make this change. The Applicants submit that requiring control of the deposit of replenishment cable protection already consented serves only to increase bureaucracy without providing any additional environmental benefits. There are no environmental harms associated with the installation of replenishment protection up to the limits established by the Draft DCO that would not have already been assessed, mitigated, managed and compensated for through the main project consents. Such a condition would therefore be unreasonable and unnecessary.* *The Applicants also highlight the reasons that replenishment protection is required include reducing risks to other sea users which might be caused through exposed cables lying on the seabed, and also to reduce the risk of reductions in operational time or output (potentially denying the transmission of up to 3 GW of clean power to the UK grid) should exposed cables become damaged whist waiting for approvals to make protection deposits. Both of these risks increase in proportion with delays to the deposits of replenishment protection which might arise as a result of the suggested process.* *The Applicants direct the ExA to the response provided to Natural England in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-065:6), presented below for ease:* *'The Applicants' position remains that replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DMLs could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. These footprints would be established through the discharge of the Reporting of Scour and Cable Protection conditions in each DML (for example, see Condition 23 in DML 1 (Schedule 10) within the Draft*	

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			DCO (Revision 6) [document reference 3.1]) with the volumes of deposition also managed through these conditions. The effects of protection introduced through this mechanism will be compensated for as part of the DBS benthic SAC compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process. The Applicants maintain that further assessment and compensation discussions relating to project activities that have been previously assessed, licenced and compensated for would be neither proportionate or necessary'.'	
A15.1	Natural England request the DCO include a condition or requirement to ensure that the project does not exceed the operational lifetime considered within the Environmental Statement. See cover letter of Natural England's Deadline 4 submission for further detail.	Deadline 4 New Issue Deadline 5 & 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change.	Deadline 5 The Applicants refer to **The Applicants' Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027] (BGC.1.9): *'The Applicants do not think that it is appropriate to specify the operational lifetime of the Projects in the **Draft DCO (Revision 6)** [document reference 3.1]. The operational period of 30 to 32 years in the ES is an estimate to enable the assessment of the environmental effects of the Projects pursuant to the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The operational lifetime of a wind farm is generally not fixed and is driven by fatigue, operational maintenance and expected life of the turbines. In order to maximise the contribution of the Projects to the Government's legal targets to achieve net zero and ensure the ongoing provision of low carbon renewable generating capacity, it is important to retain flexibility in the operational period.* *Furthermore, the Applicants would highlight that the lifetime of the Projects is already controlled through the requirements of the Energy Act 2004, which require the Applicants to submit a decommissioning programme to the* *Secretary of State prior to commencement of the Projects' offshore works (which is secured through requirement 7 of the **Draft DCO (Revision 6)** [document reference 3.1]). The decommissioning programme would include details of the measures to be taken for decommissioning the Projects and the times at which, or the periods within which, those measures will have to be taken. That programme must be approved by the Secretary of State who is therefore able to retain control over the operational lifetime of the Projects. The ES assesses the realistic worst case scenario and as detailed above and in **Chapter 5 Project Description (Revision 3)** [REP1-009] is based on the indicative design of 30-32* *years, although this might be extended further as technology advances. The Applicants consider if this were to be extended to allow a longer operational period this would not alter the outcomes of the assessments, and the relevant mitigation would still be in place ensuring the levels of impact are acceptable.'* Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position stated above. End of Examination Position	

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			The Applicants maintain the position as outlined in **The Applicants' Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027] (BGC.1.9) (see Deadline 5 above) and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed internal discussions were being held on this matter and was unlikely to be agreed during the Examination process.	
Commitments Register				
A16	Natural England advise further clarity is required from the Applicants on the purpose of the document before we can provide any detailed nature conservation advice.	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have confirmed that the Commitments Register is a certified document and has updated the DCO [Rev 03; AS-121]. However, this does not address our concerns with the Current Commitments Register as written.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
A17	Natural England advise that any named document should be clear on what the Applicants commitments/requirements are, and include any rationale/justification as to why the commitments are being made, even if how they will be delivered is currently unknown.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 No change. We maintain our advice that commitments/requirements should be clear and should include any rationale/justification as to why the commitments are being made. In particular, we note for commitment C142: "Any sediment removed from within the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation during construction of the authorised scheme must be disposed of within that part of the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation which falls within the Order limits". As detailed in Points B17, B44, B45, C21, C33, C34 and further advised in Appx C2.1 [REP2-065], we continue to advise that disposal should be in areas of similar sediment, upstream of the impacts and through the use of a fall/down pipe. Furthermore this commitment is missing cross reference to relevant ES chapter. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Whilst some updates re sediment disposal have been made to	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A21): *'The Applicants have sought further clarity from Natural England on which specific measures they considered were too heavily caveated in the **Commitments Register** [APP-231]. As noted in further detail in the response to RR-039: A22, all mitigation detailed in the ES chapters is included in the register.* *Natural England have clarified that specific comments on mitigation measures, which they feel are not specific enough are provided for each thematic within the 'Have the impacts been avoided / reduced by the use of appropriate mitigation?' section for EIA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in their Relevant Representation responses. Therefore, specific responses on the wording of mitigation are included where raised throughout the Applicants' response to this relevant representation'.* Deadline 2 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058]: *'The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter. However, it should be noted that although the Commitments Register [APP-231] is a certified document, it is not the securing document. The 'Relevant Application Document(s)' column includes the document in which the detailed mitigation measure is documented. The 'How is Commitment Secured / Implemented?' column includes the relevant DCO requirement or Deemed Marine License (DML) condition which secures that Application Document.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]:	

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		Points B17, B44, C21, C33, C34 for detail on sediment disposal, these have not been reflected in an updated Commitment Register. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*'The Applicants note Natural England's concerns and will add an introductory section to this document to contextualise its purpose, utility and relationship to consent submissions. An update to this document will be submitted at Deadline 5.* *As regards C142, this commitment is not relevant to a particular chapter as the mitigation was included for the purpose of mitigating impacts to the Dogger Bank SAC in the R**eport to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment - Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish - Volume 6** [APP-046].* *The Applicants refer Natural England to their responses to Natural England's REP2-065::3. and REP2-065::3.5 in T**he Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents (Revision 1**) [REP3-028] for information relating to their proposals for disposing of dredged material within the Dogger Bank SAC.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037]: *'The Applicants will submit an updated revision of the **Commitments Register (Revision 3)** [document reference: 8.6] at Deadline 7 alongside the updated Environmental Statement, which will include updated commitments with regards to sediment disposal. This document update will provide confirmation of the intended purpose of this document, its contents and how it should be read within the context of the wider Environmental Statement.'* Deadline 7 The Applicants confirm that the updated **Commitments Register (Revision 3)** [REP7-101] has been submitted at Deadline 7. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that following the submission of the updated **Commitments Register (Revision 3)** [REP7-101] and updated ES chapters at Deadline 7, all commitments made by the Applicants have been appropriately referenced and secured within the Applicants' documentation. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Commitments Register (Revision 3)** [REP7-101] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
A18	Natural England advise that a Schedule of Mitigation is provided for the DBS projects. If alternative approaches are taken by the Applicants, then any document needs to be more certain on key deliverables.	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England maintain their concerns around the content and context of the Commitments Register. Deadline 2 No change	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A22): *'The **Commitments Register** [APP-231] sets out all the commitments that the Applicants have made and details at what phase of the works they would be undertaken. The Applicants can confirm this includes all embedded or additional mitigation, monitoring or compensation measures detailed in the ES chapters and it delivers the same function as a 'Schedule of Mitigation'. It also clearly sets out how the commitment or mitigation is secured in the **Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP-027] and the relevant certified Application document the measure is included within e.g. the **OCoCP** [APP-234]. Where a mitigation measure or*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix A - Development Consent Order	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 3, 4, 5, & 6 No change. Natural England maintain their concerns around the content and context of the Commitments Register. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*commitment is relevant to multiple ES chapters wording has been standardised across assessments and this is clearly identified. This approach was adopted to avoid duplicating mitigation measures and commitments. This is also a similar approach to that adopted by the Hornsea Project Four Offshore Windfarm and the Applicants note that the naming of the document as a Commitments Register is in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate Guidance: "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Commitments Register" (September 2024).* *Natural England has provided further clarification to the Applicants in an email dated 5th November 2024 and asked that the structure of the document is considered in relation to the Schedule of Mitigation from the Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm Project. The Applicants confirm that they consider the* ***Commitments Register*** *[APP-231] to be robust and provide sufficient detail on the mitigation measures committed to in the DCO application and do not propose to update it. However, they will discuss these recent comments further with Natural England'.* The Applicants note that the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] was submitted at Deadline 2. A excel version was also emailed to Natural England on 18th February 2025 to aid their use. Deadline 2 The Applicants responded to Natural England in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058]: *'Following the last discussion on this issue Natural England clarified that specific comments on mitigation measures which they felt were not specific enough would be provided for each topic in their Relevant Representation [RR-039] and Deadline 1 submission [REP1-063]. Therefore, specific responses on the wording of mitigation are included where raised throughout The Applicants' response to the Relevant representation [AS-048] and The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents [document reference 12.3].* *The Applicants have reviewed the Schedule of Mitigation from the Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm Project referenced by Natural England. The Applicants consider the Commitments Register [APP-231] to be robust and provide sufficient detail on the mitigation measures committed to in the DCO application and do not propose to update the structure which is adapted from Planning Inspectorate Guidance: "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Commitments Register" (September 2024). However, the Commitments Register (Revision 2) [document reference 8.6] has been updated at Deadline 2 to include any updates to the wording of mitigation or commitments which have occurred since the Application was submitted. A spreadsheet format Commitments Register has been provided to Natural England to allow them to filter commitments by ES Chapter, as they have previously requested.* *Where a mitigation measure or commitment is relevant to multiple ES chapters wording has been standardised across assessments and this is clearly identified. This approach was adopted to avoid duplicating mitigation measures and commitments. This is also a similar approach to that adopted by the Hornsea Project Four Offshore Windfarm and the Applicants note that the naming of the document as a Commitments Register is in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate Guidance: "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Commitments Register" (September 2024). We will seek to discuss this matter*	

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			with Natural England ahead of Deadline 3, when they have had an opportunity to review the spreadsheet format.' Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position as stated above. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that following the submission of the updated **Commitments Register (Revision 3)** [REP7-101] and updated ES chapters at Deadline 7, all commitments made by the Applicants have been appropriately referenced and secured within the Applicants documentation and that a separate Schedule of Mitigation is not required. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Commitments Register (Revision 3)** [REP7-101] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
Other Documents				
A19	The OOOMP will need updating and a final plan submitted and agreed (in consultation with the relevant SNCB) prior to construction. See A7.	Deadline 1 & 2 No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. See Point A7.	The Applicants acknowledged this comment in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A23): Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
A20	The definition of maintain should be consistent between the DCO and OOOMP. See A1.	Deadline 1 & 2 No change. Deadline 3 No change. See Point A1. Deadline 5, 6 & 7 No change.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A24) below, and R-039: A1 in Point A1 of this table: *'The Applicants acknowledge this comment and will review the definition of "maintain" within these documents.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants maintain their position as detailed in response to REP3-060: A1 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] and repeated below for convenience (REP5-061: A20): *'The definition of "maintain" is already linked to the Environmental Statement – it includes the words "to the extent assessed in the Environmental Statement". It is also the same as the definition of "maintain" used in the **Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOOMP) (Revision 3)** [REP2-045] (see paragraph 5 of that document), albeit the definition in the OOOMP uses slightly different language, for example "inspection" rather than "inspect" and "adjustment" rather than "adjust". Therefore, the Applicants remain of the position that no amendments are required to the definition of "maintain" and would hope that this can be agreed with Natural England.*	

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			*To allow the similarities of the definitions of 'maintain' within the **Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (Revision 9)** [document reference 3.1] and the **OOOMP (Revision 3)** [REP2-045] to be clearly understood, these are presented one above the other below.* *The definition of maintain in the **Draft DCO (Revision 9)** [document reference 3.1] is as follows:* *"maintain" includes inspect, upkeep, repair, adjust, alter, and further includes remove, reconstruct and replace (including replenishment of cable protection), but does not include the removal, reconstruction or replacement of foundations associated with the authorised project, to the extent assessed in the environmental statement; and any derivation of "maintain" must be construed accordingly* *The definition of maintain in the **OOOMP (Revision 3)** [REP2-045] is as follows:* *A full definition of maintain is provided in Volume 3, **Draft Development Consent Order (application ref: 3.1), i**ncluding within each Deemed Marine Licence (DML).* *As such, the definition of 'maintain' is taken to include inspection, upkeep, repair, adjustment, alteration, removal, reconstruction and replacement (including replenishment of cable protection), but does not include the removal, reconstruction or replacement of foundations associated with the authorised scheme, to the extent assessed in the environmental statement. "Maintenance" must be construed accordingly to the extent assessed in the respective receptor chapter of the ES.'* Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A1 of this table. End of Examination Position The Applicants note in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter was now agreed.	
A21	Natural England is concerned about what is and is not permitted as part of the DCO/dML through this named plan, in relation to replacement of cable protection over the lifetime of the project and any 'allowances' for new cable protection. We advise that further cable protection and scour prevention within Dogger Bank SAC would require a new marine licence, and that outside of the SAC a register should be kept and summited annually to the MMO on any placement of cable protection. This should include the volume, footprint and locations to ensue commitments have been adhered to and indirect impacts to designated sites avoided. See A15, A22.	Deadline 1 No change - Natural England are reviewing the updated Outline Operations and Maintenance Plan (Revision 02) [AS-028] and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 & 4: No change - please see Point A15 for further information regarding our advice on scour / cable protection replenishment. Deadline 5	The Applicants acknowledged this comment in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A25): *'The Applicants intend to submit an updated **OOOMP** [APP-248]. Please see the response to RR-039: A3 for further detail.'* RR-039: A3 - *'In the Applicants' response to the MMO's relevant representation (see section 4.6 of **The Applicant's Responses to Relevant Representations** [PDA-013]), the Applicants confirmed that the **Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOOMP)** [APP-248] will be updated to clarify that a separate marine licence, or licences, will be sought during operation for the deposit of new cable and scour protection (i.e. in areas where no protection was installed during construction). It is envisaged that these applications would cover 10 year periods post-construction. For clarity, it is intended that no new marine licences will be sought for any additional or replenishment protection required during the operational phase in areas that were protected as part of construction, unless such protection would exceed the maximum amounts authorised by the DMLs.*	

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		No change - please see Point A15 for further information regarding our advice on scour / cable protection replenishment. Deadline 6 No change - please see Point A15 for further information regarding our advice on scour / cable protection replenishment. Deadline 7 "No change. However, we note that within The ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft DCO [PD-028], the ExA has recommended the following additions for cable protection: "*(g) Cable protection replenishment outside European marine designated sites with benthic habitats as qualifying features for a maximum period of ten years post construction;* *(7) No cable protection can be replenished within European marine designated sites with benthic habitats as qualifying features unless otherwise agreed in writing by the MMO in consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation body and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.* *(8) The undertaker is not required to comply with sub-paragraph (7) in a case of emergency."* Natural England welcome article (g), however, we advise that for (7), replenishment of cable protection should be subject to a new Marine Licence. See Appendix O7 of Natural England's Deadline 7 submission for further detail.	*The Applicants are of the opinion that a distinction should not be drawn in protection maintenance licencing terms between areas within or beyond any Marine Protected Areas as long as any future protection levels fall below the worst case scenario levels assessed within the Environmental Statement (ES) and the Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA). The impacts of this protection will be compensated for as part of the Dogger Bank (DBS) South benthic Special Area of Conservation (SAC) compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect and compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process and further assessment and compensation discussions would be neither proportionate or necessary. If additional cable protection for maintenance purposes was required beyond the maximum limits authorised by the DMLs then a separate marine licence or licences would be required.* *Each DML includes a condition relating to the production of cable and scour (if appropriate) reports at the end of construction. In fulfilment of this condition the Applicants must provide a report detailing where protection was laid during the construction campaign. The details presented in these reports would delineate the end of the construction period from a cable and scour protection perspective. Additional wording will be added to the relevant DML conditions requiring these reports to be updated where replenishment protection is deposited during the operational period.'* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in T**he Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] stating: *'The Applicants' position remains that replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DMLs could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. These footprints would be established through the discharge of the Reporting of Scour and Cable Protection conditions in each DML (for example, see Condition 23 in DML 1 (Schedule 10) within the **Draft DCO (Revision 6)** [document reference 3.1]) with the volumes of deposition also managed through these conditions. The effects of protection introduced through this mechanism will be compensated for as part of the DBS benthic SAC compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process. The Applicants maintain that further assessment and compensation discussions relating to project activities that have been previously assessed, licenced and compensated for would be neither proportionate or necessary. The Applicants reiterate that protection required in 'new areas' where no protection had previously been placed, would be licenced in ten year blocks following the completion of construction. This will help to ensure management of impacts whilst preserving the flexibility that the Applicants require in order to adequately maintain and operate a complex asset in a dynamic environment. Please see the Applicants' response to RR-039: C13 in **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] for the full proposal.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants maintain their position as stated above however, the Applicants are seeking meetings with Natural England between Deadlines 4 and 5 to discuss a number of technical issues. This matter	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix A - Development Consent Order	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			will be on the agenda with the intention of moving the Applicants' and Natural England's positions into closer alignment. Deadline 5 See response provided at Deadline 5 in Point A15 of this table. Deadline 6 See response provided at Deadline 6 in Point A15 of this table. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (RE6-061:A21): *'Table 2-3 of the **Outline OOMP** [REP2-045] is clear that any new cable protection during operation, including at new locations, would require a new Marine Licence. Replacement or addition to cable protection during operation in the same area as cable protection has been installed during construction (up to the limits set out for the Projects as a whole) would be undertaken under the DMLs in accordance with condition 7 of DML1 (and equivalent conditions in the other DMLs) and would not require a new Marine Licence.* *Condition 23 of DML1 (and equivalent conditions in the other DMLs) requires ongoing reporting of scour and cable protection, including where such protection is replenished during operation. This requirement includes for provision of the location and volume of cable and scour protection and any other information relating to such protection as is agreed between the MMO and the undertaker.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as detailed in **The Applicants' Comments on the ExA's Proposed Schedule of Changes to the dDCO** [REP7-130]: *The Applicants are of the opinion that this amendment is unnecessary and do not propose to make this change. The Applicants submit that requiring control of the deposit of replenishment cable protection already consented serves only to increase bureaucracy without providing any additional environmental benefits. There are no environmental harms associated with the installation of replenishment protection up to the limits established by the Draft DCO that would not have already been assessed, mitigated, managed and compensated for through the main project consents. Such a condition would therefore be unreasonable and unnecessary.* *The Applicants also highlight the reasons that replenishment protection is required include reducing risks to other sea users which might be caused through exposed cables lying on the seabed, and also to reduce the risk of reductions in operational time or output (potentially denying the transmission of up to 3 GW of clean power to the UK grid) should exposed cables become damaged whist waiting for approvals to make protection deposits. Both of these risks increase in proportion with delays to the deposits of replenishment protection which might arise as a result of the suggested process.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix A - Development Consent Order	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			*The Applicants direct the ExA to the response provided to Natural England in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-065:6), presented below for ease:* *'The Applicants' position remains that replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DMLs could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. These footprints would be established through the discharge of the Reporting of Scour and Cable Protection conditions in each DML (for example, see Condition 23 in DML 1 (Schedule 10) within the Draft DCO (Revision 6) [document reference 3.1]) with the volumes of deposition also managed through these conditions. The effects of protection introduced through this mechanism will be compensated for as part of the DBS benthic SAC compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process. The Applicants maintain that further assessment and compensation discussions relating to project activities that have been previously assessed, licenced and compensated for would be neither proportionate or necessary'.*	
A22	Natural England would welcome MMO views on Table 2-3 and the identification of additional scour prevention and cable protection within Dogger Bank SAC not requiring a marine licence. Additionally, we are concerned that whilst the use of sub-bottom profilers doesn't currently require a marine licence, there may be in-combination significant impacts as a result of cumulative under water noise pressures that may not be addressed through the OOOMP proposals as written.	<u>Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position</u> No change.	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: A26): *'The Applicants welcome feedback on scour and cable protection. The Applicants will take a position on the possibility of provisions of a marine licence for sub-bottom profiler work when appropriate'.* And as stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-075:2.4.2): *'The Applicants previously submitted response to RR-030: 4.5.4 on the matter in **The Applicants' Responses to Relevant Representations** [PDA-013] is detailed below:* *The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The requested amendment to clarify that a separate licence will be sought for the deposit of new cable and scour protection in areas where no protection was installed during construction will be made in an update to the **Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan** [APP-248].* *The wording related to "New cable protection beyond the maximum, in terms of both volume of material and area covered, set out in for construction under the relevant Deemed Marine Licences" and "New scour protection beyond the maximum, in terms of both volume of material and area covered, set out in the relevant Deemed Marine Licences" will be updated to clarify that protection in new areas will require a separate Marine Licence. The updated **Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan** [APP-248] will be presented at Deadline 1.* *To note an updated version of the **Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan** [AS-027] was issued on the 8th November 2024 and an updated version of **Other Consents and Licences (Revision 3)** [REP1-023] was submitted at Deadline 1 to address this matter. The Applicants note that the MMO will provide comment on the remaining representations at Deadline 2 of the Examination'.*	

3.3 Marine Physical Environment

Table 3-3 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Marine Physical Environment

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
B1	For indentations on the seabed due to installation vessels, the Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for anchoring for either DBS E or W in isolation is 244,640m2, however, the maximum total impacted area by anchoring is stated as 22,061m2. It is unclear which of these values is the MDS for seabed area affected by anchoring. This is also the case for the DBS E and DBS W concurrent/sequential scenario MDS. Clarification on the MDS for all construction scenarios is required. (7.8: Table 8-1).	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. We agree with the clarification provided by the Applicants and advise that Table 8-1 of [APP-080] is updated to resolve this issue. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No Change. Table 4-2 in [AS-141] provides updated MDS for anchoring for the different build scenarios and stages of the development. However, we maintain that relevant application documents should be updated to reflect these changes. Deadline 4 No change. We will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7.	Deadline 2 The Applicants direct Natural England to response REP1-063:3 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058]: '*The Applicants note this previous comment regarding the updating of the ES and RIAA is now outdated, with updates having been provided on a case-by-case basis where there were multiple material changes to be made (e.g.* ***RIAA HRA - Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish*** *[APP-046] was superseded by* ***RIAA HRA - Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 2)*** *[AS-051],* ***RIAA HRA- Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features*** *[APP-048] superseded by* ***RIAA HRA- Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 2)*** *[AS-085]). However, the Applicants do not consider that it is appropriate to be updating documents in line with every comment and representation generally throughout examination.* *There are many parts of the ES that are not relevant to NE or their competencies, but which would need to be updated for consistency if it were general practice to update assessments as NE requests. In general, this is not an efficient use of time and does not add value to the examination process. In addition, the actual footprints of effect, noise impacts, mortalities etc will relate to the final detailed design not the Rochdale Envelope consented by Secretary of State, so in the longer term any updates to the ES would also be superseded when final designs are known. Again, we note that this is not normal practice, would not add significant value to the delivery of the Projects and is not proportionate.* *We would question NE's assertion that the ES is used extensively post-consent for the simple reason that it is the Secretary of State's decisions (including HRA) DCO and ML and certified documents which are the basis of consent compliance, not the EIA, RIAA as presented at Application. The DCO, DMLs and certified documents will refer to the parameters permitted, and the Application will need to demonstrate how detailed design fits within these – it should not be necessary (given that the parameters are consented) for NE to re-examine how these relate to the Maximum Design Parameters and Worst case Scenarios assessed in the EIA/RIAA where the design envelope remains at, or below that presented within the Rochdale Envelope.* *The Applicants have updated Schedule 19 of the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 5)*** *[REP1-004] to ensure that the definition of "environmental statement" incorporates the changes to the Projects made by* ***Project Change Requests 1 and 2****. At the request of the ExA, the Applicants are also considering the structure of Schedule 19 with a view to making it as clear as possible where any aspects of the ES have been updated since submission of the DCO application'.* Deadline 4	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			An updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7 which will address this comment. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
B2	For changes to bedload sediment transport due to cable protection measures, there are inconsistencies in the total footprint of inter-platform cable protection, number of array/inter-platform cable pipeline/cable crossings, and the total footprint of pipeline/cable crossing material for array cables and inter-platform cables across project build scenarios. Clarification is required. (7.8).	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position The Applicants have confirmed that the numbers presented are correct.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
B3	The rationale behind remedial cable protection along 10% of the cable route within Dogger Bank SAC should be provided, with evidence provided to justify a realistic Worst Case Scenario (WCS). Specific locations (informed by acoustic data) of areas requiring cable protection should be identified, including identification of affected features/sensitive habitats. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 and C2.2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. No further information or rationale has been provided, and in [AS-141] there is no change to the 10% cable protection requirement for the array and inter-platform cables. Deadline 4 No change - the Applicant has confirmed that no further revisions will be made to the CBRA within Examination timeframes [REP3-028]. We maintain our advice that further information and rationale is provided for the WCS for cable protection within DB SAC. We advise that it would be helpful if the Applicant could provide indicative locations for remedial cable protection requirements based on	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B11): *'Appendix J-1 of the Round 4 Plan Level HRA4 assumed a maximum 10% of cable length requiring protection within the Dogger Bank SAC. Due to the Projects' array cable and Inter-Platform Cable layouts not yet being finalised at the time of submission, it was required to assess a potential worst case distance of cabling that may require external cable protection measures. As such, to ensure the parameters assessed did not exceed those detailed within the Round 4 Plan Level HRA and to ensure the absolute worst case was assessed, this 10% of cable length requiring protection within the Dogger Bank SAC footprint was chosen.* *As noted in the embedded mitigation measures for detailed in Table 8-3 of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080], the Applicants are committed to burying Offshore Export Cables to 0.5-1.5m (depending on cable location) where practicable, minimising the requirement for external cable protection measures and thus effects on sediment transport. This includes any Offshore Export Cables located within the Dogger Bank SAC'.* Deadline 4 See the Applicants' response to this matter in ISH2.4.4 in T**he Applicants' Responses to Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) Supplementary Agenda Questions** [REP1-050]: *'The DBS Array Area Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) remains at a Preliminary stage, from a study completed in 2023. The Applicants are not planning to develop a revised version until the turbines proposed for use by the Projects have been chosen (likely Q3 2025 and, therefore, post-Examination)*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		currently available information. Please see Appendix B4 to our Deadline 4 submission for further information including our concerns regarding seabed mobility and cable burial risk on Dogger Bank. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 No change. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 response in relation to public interest tests. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP5-036, MCP 2.9] that there will be no changes to the worst-case scenario assumption of a maximum of 10% of the cable route within DB SAC requiring cable protection. We maintain our previous advice.	*and the array layout is finalised (similar time frame). The Applicants conducted geotechnical site investigations in the Array Area at DBS West in 2024, and will be commencing geotechnical studies at DBS East in 2025. Using information arising from these surveys updates of the array area ground models will enable a refined CBRA to be developed in late 2025 – again, post-close of the DBS DCO Examination.* *The indications are that the Array Areas (the most significant part of the Projects for construction in the Special Area of Conservation (SAC)) shouldn't present areas of burial challenge. The site boundaries brought forward for Examination were refined from the Agreement for Lease boundaries presented at the PEIR stage in part to exclude high density boulder regions which would have presented significant burial risk. Despite the removal of this area of potentially challenging ground conditions, an upper limit of 10% of remedial protection (excluding cable / pipeline crossings and approaches to wind turbine and platform foundations where cables entering J-tubes need to be protected) has been assessed on the basis of the level of uncertainty that currently exists prior to geotechnical survey outputs being available and prior to a specific array cable layout being developed.* *The Applicants are not a participant in Dogger Bank A and B and do not have evidence in relation to those projects. We understand that construction is on-going on these projects and final cable protection values would not be available until construction has finished. In any case, the Applicants also do not consider that using the 'actual' (verified after installation is complete) remedial burial protection quantities from another project would be appropriate or applicable for the DBS Projects as there is a need to allow for the inherent uncertainty that exists until site design and investigations are complete, burial depths and methodology are selected, and ultimately until the physical process of laying/burying the cables is complete. If the Applicants were to lay cables on the seabed surface without an agreed option for remedial burial protection, the cables would be subject to high risk of damage during the potentially lengthy period of time it would take to seek approval for secondary cable protection to be installed. Further, there would be additional seabed disturbance then associated with any cable repair works which would be likely to occur with greater frequency over more extensive areas should remedial cable protection usage be sub-optimal from an asset protection perspective.* *The final volumes, areas and locations of remedial cable protection will not exceed the worst case values presented in the **Draft DCO (Revision 5)** [document reference: 3.1]. The predicted final volumes, areas and locations of anticipated remedial cable protection will be included in the final Cable Statement(s) which will require MMO approval under each dML prior to the commencement of construction. The final Cable Statement(s) will be produced in alignment with Cable Statement (Revision 2) [AS-078]). Conditions within each dML (e.g. Condition 23 in Schedule 10) require the Applicants to report to the MMO and the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies the details of the cable protection and scour protection used within the authorised scheme following the completion of construction. Thus, it is clear that there will be a high level of control of the deployment of remedial cable protection prior to and beyond construction.* *The Applicants wish to clarify that the primary means of cable protection is burial and that every effort will be taken to maximise burial potential reduce the use of costly, time-consuming remedial protection measures through appropriate cable design, routeing and micro-siting and the selection of the most*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			appropriate installation methods. Aside any environmental concerns, the Applicants are deeply incentivised to minimise the use of remedial protection at all project stages.' Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037]: '*The Applicants note that preliminary cable protection locations for the Export Cable Route are presented in **Appendix B BAS Tables of Appendix 2 of the Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-050]. Natural England should note that this information is not final. It remains preliminary and subject to future updates and revisions as further site information becomes available. Equivalent information is not available for the array area cabling or inter-platform cabling at present as no indicative routes are yet available and further site investigation work needs to be completed. Thus, indicative locations for cable protection for the array area cabling or inter-platform cabling will not be available until the DBS examination has closed. The final cable protection locations will be presented within the final Cable Statement that is submitted in fulfilment of condition 15(1)(i) of Deemed Marine Licence 1 within the **Draft DCO (Revision 8)** [document reference 3.1] and those submitted to discharge similar conditions included within each of the further Deemed Marine Licences.'* Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as outlined at Deadline 5 and in Point A15 in **Table 3-2,** and note discussions will continue post-Examination on this matter.	
B4	The WCS for remedial cable protection assumes 20% of the export cable route will require remedial protection outside of Dogger Bank SAC. A realistic worst case scenario on the locations for cable protection should be identified (informed by geophysical and geotechnical data). We also advise that the rationale (including supporting evidence) for this requirement should be provided. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. We understand the Applicants are updating the Cable Burial Risk Assessment [APP-244]. We will provide further comment when this is submitted into Examination. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 and C2.2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. No further information or rationale has been provided and in [AS-141], there is no change to the 20% of the export cable length requiring surface laid cable protection. We also seek clarification on whether the results of the ECR Preliminary CBRA	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B12): *'A figure of 20% of Offshore Export Cable length requiring protection outside the Dogger Bank SAC was chosen based on assumptions made for other recent offshore wind farm projects located in areas of similar seabed composition such as Awel y Môr6.* *The lengths, locations and volumes of cable protection required will be iterated as the Projects are further developed and more detailed site investigation information becomes available. The Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) (**Cable Statement** [APP-244]) is now being updated using the results of the 2023 Site Investigation campaign which included geotechnical sampling on routes B and C. The results of the updated CBRA indicate volumes of protection required that are in broad alignment with those put forward within the application when the uncertainties are considered. As such, the Applicants believe that the 20% protection figure noted remains a realistic WCS'.* The **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-] was submitted at Deadline 2 and contained updates in response to Natural England's relevant representations and the acceptance of the **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141].	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		provided in Appendix B of [REP2-040] alter this requirement (see B49). Deadline 4 No change - we maintain our advice that further information and rationale is provided for the WCS for cable protection outside of DB SAC, however the Applicant has confirmed that no further revisions will be made to the CBRA within Examination timeframes [REP3-028]. We therefore advise that it would be helpful if the Applicant could provide indicative locations for remedial cable protection requirements based on currently available information. See Appendix B4 of our Deadline 4 submission for further detail on bedform migration rates and directions, seabed mobility, and sediment transport. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 No change. Natural England notes that in [REP5-040] the Applicant states that burial of export cables may not practicably be achievable due to the presence of chalk bedrock in the shallow subsurface. However, the known and expected locations where cable protection will be required have not been provided. Whilst, the Applicant has indicated [REP5-037] that preliminary cable protection locations for the Export Cable Route are presented in Appendix B BAS Tables of Appendix 2 of the Cable Statement (Revision 4) [REP4-050], this Appendix is difficult to interpret and does not contain finalised information (n.b we assume the reference should be to Appendix F of Appendix B of the Cable Statement). See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicants have updated the Cable Statement [REP6-044] with a figure showing indicative locations of protection along the ECC (outside of DB SAC). This has been based on the 2024	Deadline3: In **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028], it is stated that: *'The Applicants have developed a worst case scenario for cable protection along the Offshore Export Cable Corridor that is informed, in part, by available geophysical and geotechnical information combined with their knowledge and experience of developing, constructing and operating offshore wind farms. The Applicants are of the opinion that the information presented on a Rochdale Envelope basis for consenting purposes represents a reasonable worst case based on their knowledge of the site and of experience of delivering other offshore wind farm projects.* *As noted for the derivation of a percentage value for cable protection along the cable routes in the array areas (see the response to REP2-069:B3 above), the Applicants have undertaken a CBRA for the Export Cable Corridor. The latest version of this CBRA is Appended to **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-039]. The CBRA will be further updated as the DBS Projects mature and the worst case scenario for cable protection will be refined and presented as a final figure (along with a final CBRA) within the Final Cable Statements which will be submitted for MMO approval and their advisors comments prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicants maintain that the worst case scenario presented is a reasonable estimate which aligns with the maturity of the Projects and is based, in part, on available site information combined with their knowledge and experience of developing, constructing and operating offshore wind farms.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants re-iterate their response provided in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028]: *'The Applicants would like to reiterate that the final version of the CBRA will not be completed within the time frame of examination. There will also be no updates to the existing CBRA within the time frame of examination. This is because there is no new information or data available to the Applicants that can provide any further understanding than has already been documented. The Applicants are in the process of planning additional surveys for summer 2025. When the results become available, they will feed into the CBRAs as they are further updated post consent. The final CBRAs will be appended to any final Cable Statements submitted by the Applicants in fulfilment of the relevant DML Conditions relating to this matter, such as condition (such as condition 15 (1) (g) in Schedule 10). Hence, Natural England will have sight of, and opportunity to comment on, these documents and any related engineering proposals as part of the DML condition discharge process.* *The current understanding of seabed mobility is outlined in section 8.5.8. of **Chapter 9 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080]. This baseline understanding is based on a Projects-specific seabed mobility study undertaken by the Applicants to inform the assessment (MarineSpace, 2023). The study assesses multiple bathymetric surveys to quantify bed level change and shows that levels of change are of the order of 0.2m over an 11 year period in the Array Area. This study has been provided for consideration during the examination period, see the Bed Mobility & Thermal Environment [document reference: 13.7] submitted at Deadline 3. As noted above, it is expected this document will be*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Burial Assessment Study in REP6-044, which they have highlighted is preliminary and indicative only. However, the WCS for external cable protection (20% of the cable route) outside DB SAC has not been refined down based on this latest information.	*superseded as further site investigation and design work is completed prior to construction. The Applicants re-iterate that, as noted above, there are protections written into the Draft DCO that will ensure that Natural England have the opportunity to review the information requested once it is available as part of the process of discharging DML conditions.'* Deadline 5 See response provided at Deadline 5 for Point B3 of this table. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B4): *'A figure presenting the indicative locations of cable protection in relation to nearby designated site boundaries was included in the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] issued at Deadline 6. Notwithstanding this, until the final cable burial risk assessment is undertaken and burial is complete the final burial locations and quantities will not be known. The Applicants final cable protection proposals will be presented in the Final Cable Statement(s) submitted to discharge conditions in in each DML presented in the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1] (e.g. condition 15(1)(i) of Schedule 10: Deemed Marine Licence 1.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants note that the final cable protection proposals will be presented in the Final Cable Statement(s) submitted to discharge conditions in in each DML presented in the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [REP7-011] (e.g. condition 15(1)(i) of Schedule 10: Deemed Marine Licence 1. Until this point, the realistic WCS of cable protection of 20% has not been refined down to ensure an absolute worst-case has been assessed in the ES and RIAA. No further changes will be made to this figure prior to the end of Examination, however discussions will continue post-Examination on this matter.	
B5	For the Operational impact *"Cable Repairs and Reburial"*, the activity has been described, but no associated LSE pathways have been included. The Applicants should specify the LSEs and provide the MDS for each activity during operation (for all build scenarios). The WCS impact on each MPA and affected features should also be provided for direct and indirect effects. (7.8: Table 8-1).	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. The Applicants have confirmed that text was missing from the table. We advise that Table 8-1 of [APP-080] is updated accordingly. Deadline 2 No change. Whilst an updated Outline offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan [AS-028] has been provided, this has not addressed this issue. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Applicants have provided the WCS volume of sediment displaced during O&M activities in the Array Areas and Offshore Export Cable	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B13). *'Column One of Operational impact 6 should read 'Changes in suspended sediment concentration, transport and seabed level due to cable repairs and reburial'. This additional text should also be applied to wherever 'Cable repairs and reburial' appears in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] (e.g. heading of section 8.7.4.6).'* Deadline 2 The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment. In addition, The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-063:3). See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 2. Deadline 3	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Corridor in [AS-141], however the WCS impact needs to be provided for any affected MPAs. Deadline 4 No change - updates to ES documents are required to resolve. We will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. The Applicant has provided worst-case operational impacts of cable repairs and reburial on relevant protected sites in Appendix A of [REP4-088]. We understand that updates to ES documents will be submitted at Deadline 7 and will provide further comment accordingly.	The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'With regards to this specific point, the Applicants note the response provided under RR-039:B13 of remains valid:* *'Column One of Operational impact 6 should read 'Changes in suspended sediment concentration, transport and seabed level due to cable repairs and reburial'. This additional text should also be applied to wherever 'Cable repairs and reburial' appears in Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] (e.g. heading of section 8.7.4.6).'* *As noted in Table 8-1 of Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080], an estimated footprint of disturbance has been provided for each build-out scenario for the Projects. As it is not known at this stage of the Projects the exact locations and lengths of cables that may require repairing or reburial, the figures stated in Table 8-1 were based on the assumption that up to 25% of installed cable protection measures may require replenishment over the Projects lifetime. This figure is considered to be highly precautionary, with the real-world area of changes in suspended sediment concentration, transport and seabed level due to cable repairs and reburial likely to be much lower than this. As the original cable protection measures would be repaired or replaced, there would be no changes to the total seabed footprint of cable protection measures over that assessed in* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080].'* Deadline 4 The worst-case operational impacts of "Cable Repairs and Reburial" with regards to the relevant protected sites are detailed in Appendix A of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. Deadline 5 The Applicants confirm that an updated version of **Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7 and will include the worst-case operational impacts of cable repairs and reburial on relevant protected sites in Appendix A of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
B6	Clarification is needed on the WCS volumes for sandwave levelling/seabed for the export cable route. (7.5, 7.8).	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. The Applicants have clarified that the sandwave clearance volume presented was	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B14):	

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		incorrect. We advise that Table 8-1 of [APP-080] is updated accordingly. Deadline 2 No change. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. In [AS-141] the maximum seabed area and volume disturbed by sandwave levelling within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor has been clarified. This has also been updated in the Project Description [REP1-010]'. However, we advise that all relevant plans should be updated to reflect the revised parameters from the Change Request, including ES chapters. Deadline 4 No change - updates to ES documents are required to resolve. We will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7.	*'The sandwave clearance volume of 66,243,601m³ is incorrect and based on earlier version of the Projects' Design Envelope. As noted, the sandwave clearance volume stated in Table 5-16 of Chapter 5 Project Description [APP-071] of 62,424,700³ is the correct value.'* Deadline 2 The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment. In addition, The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-063:3). See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 2. Deadline 3 As noted in the Applicants Deadline 2 submissions, the **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-039] has been updated to note that further detail relating to sand wave levelling, deposition and sandbank recovery will be provided in the final Cable Statement(s) and / or final CBRAs. Deadline 4 An updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7 which will address this comment. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
B7	We advise that a commitment is made and secured in the DCO to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure associated with the development within benthic designated sites (excluding cable crossings). Without this, the WCS should assess the impacts of leaving assets permanently in situ rather than restricting to the operational lifetime. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Appendix C4 of our Deadline 4 submission for further detail.	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B3): *'At this stage, it is not possible for the Applicants to determine whether components would be left in situ or removed from the seabed as part of decommissioning. This will be determined as part of the decommissioning plan which will be consulted on and require approval from the regulator towards the end of the Projects' lifetime (secured within Schedule 2, Part 1, Condition 7 of the **Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP-027].* *The benefits and disbenefits of retrieving cable and scour protection will need to be balanced at that point. There are a number of compelling reasons to consider leaving cable and scour protection infrastructure left in situ may including lesser impacts in terms of disturbance effects, the preservation of potential reef habit and lower health and safety risks realised through not retrieving and handling protection material. In addition to these arguable benefits, there may be practical issues associated with the removal of protection at certain locations such as protection deployed to protect cable crossings. At such locations the Applicants may not be in a position to decommission such external protection in crossing locations (as the export and / or array cables would be crossing or be crossed by*	

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		Deadline 5 No change. We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding infrastructure decommissioning and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at Deadline 6. Deadline 6 No change - Please see Deadline 6 Appendix C6 for further detail. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicants have committed [REP6-044] to consider removability of cable protection as part of the development of the final Cable Statement and Decommissioning Programme to be produced for submission to the SoS pre construction. Whilst this is welcome, it is not sufficient to resolve concerns regarding the lack of a full commitment to decommissioning.	*third party assets). It is expected that most array and export cables (and any associated cable protection) would be left in situ. Exposed sections of cable are more likely to be cut and removed to ensure they do not become hazards to other users of the seabed. At this point in time, it cannot be accurately determined whether and which cables would be exposed at the time of decommissioning. With regards to assessing the worst case impacts to physical processes, it is assumed that decommissioning would be a reversal of the construction process whereby infrastructure would be removed. Nevertheless, it is also assumed that such impacts during decommissioning would be of similar or lesser scale compared to the construction phase. As such, the effect of decommissioning on the marine physical environment will be comparable to those during the constructions phase:* • *Changes in suspended sediment concentration due to foundation removal;* • *Changes in suspended sediment concentrations due to removal of parts of the array, Inter-Platform and Offshore Export Cables;* • *Deterioration in water quality associated with the release of sediment bound contamination;* • *Changes in seabed level due to removal of parts of the array, Inter-Platform and Offshore Export Cables; and,* • *Indentations on the seabed due to decommissioning vessels.* *The magnitude of effects would be comparable to or less than those identified for the construction phase. Accordingly, given the construction phase assessments concluded negligible significance of effect on the marine physical environment, it is anticipated that the same would be valid for the decommissioning phase regardless of the final decommissioning methodologies. The significance of effects will be the same for DBS East or DBS West in isolation and for DBS East and DBS West together'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have previously stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: NE7) that: *'The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The Applicants understand the sensitivities of the benthic habitats of the Offshore Development Area. In recognition of these sensitivities the Applicants have committed to embedded mitigation to minimise use of scour and external cable protection where practicable. Cable and scour protection methods and designs will be developed post-consent. The Applicants will give due consideration to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects post-consent.'* *Engineering assessment and design work relating to cable and scour protection is on-going. This work will not be finalised until the pre-construction phases of the Projects. As stated above consideration, will be given to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects. The Final Cable Statement(s) and final Scour Protection Plan(s) presented for the approval of MMO prior to the commencement of construction (where required under each DML) will provide the final details of cable and scour protection proposed.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			The Applicants note that Natural England will have the opportunity to comment on the finalised proposals brought forward for approval and DML condition discharge at this juncture. *Further, in terms of decommissioning, a plan will be provided for Secretary of State approval under S105 of the Energy Act 2004 prior to construction. This commitment is secured in* ***Draft DCO (Revision 6)*** *[document reference 3.1] which contains Requirement 7 which states that the Projects:* *'must not be commenced until a written decommissioning programme in compliance with any notice served upon the undertaker by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 105(2)(a) (requirement to prepare decommissioning programmes) of the 2004 Act has been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval'.* *The most appropriate time to consider the matters raised by Natural England is when detailed design is being undertaken and decommissioning proposals are developed. The Applicants highlight that post-consent controls are in place which will allow Natural England the opportunity to scrutinise project proposals at the appropriate juncture.* *As noted by Natural England, compensation will be provided for any permanent habitat loss associated with the development of the Projects, including those impacts associated with the deployment of cable and scour protection within the Dogger Bank SAC. Due to the nature of the strategic compensation to be applied, the compensation quantum is likely to be based on the worst case consent envelope for cable and scour protection rather than the actual footprint of impact. Therefore, it is likely that this compensation will exceed actual footprint of impact caused by the Projects. It is also likely that the compensation will be secured on a permanent basis, beyond the life of the Projects, thus compensating for any enduring effects of protection should any be left in situ.* *Hence, Natural England can take comfort from the fact that enduring compensation will be provided for the impacts associated with the deposition of cable and scour protection on the Dogger Bank SAC, in addition to the likelihood that any compensation will over deliver in the likely event that cable and scour protection deposition be utilised at a lower level than that indicated under the worst case scenario.* *In addition, the Applicants will continue to give due consideration to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects post-consent, with Natural England afforded opportunities to comment on these proposals in relation to the Final Cable Statements and Scour Protection Plans.* *Should the use of removable cable and scour protection be deemed viable, then the footprint of compensation relative to the footprint of impacts would be further enhanced on decommissioning.* *Finally, the Applicants note that studies focussing on the use of removable protection do not consider issues associated with design, cost, maintenance and construction that may be associated with their use. For further information see https://publications.deltares.nl/Deltares250.pdf. It is important to consider and reflect upon the fact that there are potential disbenefits associated with the use of removable protection in addition to any perceived benefits.'.*	

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			Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-127:C3): *'It is important to understand, by way of context, that the offshore wind projects previously consented within the Dogger Bank SAC have made a commitment to remove all seabed infrastructure as part of their determination of no AEoI for the Dogger Bank SAC. Thus, they are providing no compensation for losses of Annex I habitat protected by the SAC. By contrast, the Applicants have not made this commitment but have concluded that the Projects will have an AEoI for the Dogger Bank SAC. Thus, the Projects have committed to providing compensation for these impacts up to the limits established by the worst case scenario. This is a material consenting differences between previous offshore wind projects consented on the Dogger Bank and the Dogger Bank South Projects.* *The Applicants have previously presented their position in relation to decommissioning. This position can be found in the response to Natural England REP1- 067: B30 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058]. The Applicants have previously presented their position in relation to the consideration of removable cable and scour protection. This position can be found in the response to Natural England REP2-065:7.1 in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028].* *The Applicants do not intend to repeat their positions here but do note that they have made appropriate provisions to discharge the obligations placed upon the Projects under policies 2.8.88 and 2.8.89 of National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) which deal with decommissioning through the inclusion of Requirements 7(1) and 7(2) of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Revision 8)** [document reference 3.1]. These Requirements state that for each Project:* *…offshore works must not be commenced until a written decommissioning programme in compliance with any notice served upon the undertaker by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 105(2)(a) (requirement to prepare decommissioning programmes) of the 2004 Act has been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.* *The Applicants will demonstrate compliance with relevant guidance and policy where applicable in the documents submitted to discharge the relevant Deemed Marine Licence conditions.* *As regards the use of cable and scour protection and the application of the mitigation hierarchy, the Applicants note that both the **Cable Statement (Revision 4**) [REP4-050] and the **Outline Scour Protection Plan (Revision 3)** [REP2-051] contain commitments to minimise the use of external cable and scour protection, with the Cable Statement also present detail on the siting of the cable routes to avoid certain seabed features, such as areas of seabed that pose a challenge to installation, thus avoiding the potential need for protection in such areas. The Applicants again note that compensation will be provided on a precautionary basis, covering the full extent of the areas predicted for deposition in the project design envelope.* *The Applicants assert that through these commitments, secured in certified documents, they have provided a very clear demonstration of how the mitigation hierarchy has been, and will be, applied during project development. These commitments show how the Applicants will avoid the need for protection through careful micro-siting and will take mitigating steps to minimise and reduce the*	

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			footprint of protection in their final designs. This avoidance and minimisation will take place regardless of the compensation which will be brought forward for the full extent of protection included in the project design envelope. *The Applicants note that permanency of presence is just one facet of the environmental effects that cable and scour protection could have, and that there are other pertinent factors to consider when determining which protection solutions should be deployed. These include footprint, volume, replacement cycles, maintenance requirements and differences in installation impacts. With this in mind, the Applicants note that a holistic assessment of these impacts should be undertaken as part of the final design process, such that the mitigation hierarchy can be properly applied to the cable and scour protection selection process. This work cannot be undertaken at present as the project is not sufficiently matured. The correct time to properly evaluate and compare the impacts of different cable and scour protection solutions is post-consent, when the available solutions have been identified, and the mitigation hierarchy can be properly applied in a holistic and reasoned way. Attempting to prejudge the outcome of this exercise in the manner suggested may lead to avoidable impacts on the Dogger Bank SAC.* *For the reasons highlighted above the Applicants are confident that they are meeting the prescriptions of the Defra policy and wider obligations in the National Policy Statements relating to the application of the mitigation hierarchy. Further, the Applicants are also confident that they have met the provisions of the National Policy Statements where they relate to planning for decommissioning.'* Deadline 6 See response provided at Deadline 6 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as outlined at Deadline 5 and in Point A15 in **Table 3-2**.	
B8	The Preliminary CBRA is based on the Projects' Red Line Boundary (RLB) at PEIR stage, which has been significantly revised. We advise that a more up-to-date and detailed pre-consent cable burial assessment should be provided, based on the most recent RLB and turbine/cable layout. This should use project specific geotechnical data and/or data from constructed offshore windfarms to consider the likelihood of burial success to inform realistic MDS parameters for cable protection requirements. (8.20).	Deadline 1 No change. We understand the Applicants are updating the Cable Burial Risk Assessment [APP-244]. We will provide further comment when this is submitted into Examination. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3	The Applicants have responded to this point in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B18): *'The supplied CBRA (**Cable Statement** [APP-244]) for the export cables is a preliminary CBRA which includes the consideration of several potential cable corridors. The development of the CBRA is an iterative process and may require further, multiple updates as designs develop and when a Contractor is selected and the burial methodology is finalised.* *The DMLs included in the **Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP-027] require detailed cable risk assessments to be included as part of the construction method statement to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of the licensed activities, or any phase of those activities'.* Deadline 4	

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		Issue progressed but not resolved. The Applicants have provided an updated Cable Statement which includes an updated Cable Burial Risk Assessment for the Export Cable Route [REP2-040], but not for the Array Areas. If available, this should be provided as well. Please see Deadline 3 Appendix B3. Deadline 4 No change. We maintain our previous advice. We note that the Applicant has confirmed in [REP3-028] that there will be no updates to the existing CBRA during Examination. Therefore we will not provide further comment on this issue unless the Applicant provides updates to the CBRA.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:B8) stating: *'A preliminary Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) for the Array Areas is included in Appendix A of the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [document reference: 8.20]. An updated preliminary CBRA for the Export Cable Corridor was submitted at Deadline 2 – see **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-039]. The Applicants would like to reiterate that the final versions of the CBRAs will not be completed within the time frame of examination. There will also be no further updates to any existing CBRAs within the time frame of examination. Further updates to the preliminary CBRAs are dependent on future survey and design work which is not scheduled to be completed within the Examination timetable.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: B8): *'The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position on this matter, noting that an update to the Export Cable CBRA has been provided which brings the red line boundary in the Cable Burial Risk Assessments (CBRAs) into alignment with the application. As has previously been noted, and as is common for offshore wind DCO applications, the CBRAs remain preliminary and will not be finalised until the project designs are finalised at the post-consent stage of the Projects. The final CBRAs will be provided within the final Cable Statements required to discharge relevant conditions in each Deemed Marine Licence included in the Draft Development Consent Order (Revision 8) [document reference 3.1].'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as detailed at Deadline 5. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
B9	We advise that identification of regional scale sediment transport pathways is an important part of the baseline characterisation. Sediment transport pathways have been identified only for the landfall, adjacent coastline, nearshore and westernmost section of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor (OECC). We advise the Applicants to establish or infer sediment transport pathways for the remainder of the OECC and array areas. (7.8.1).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. We continue to advise that the Applicants should seek to establish a baseline characterisation of the sediment transport pathways that may be affected by the presence of the DBS projects. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. See our response to Examiner's Question (ExQ) MCP.1.2 for further	The Applicants acknowledged this comment and also directed Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B19). Deadline 4 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response to REP3-057: MCP.1.2 provided in **The Applicants' Comments on the Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027]. Deadline 5 The Applicants will collate the information currently presented in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] with the information presented in the **Bed Mobility & Thermal Environment Report** [REP3-032] and present it on a new figure showing sediment transport pathways within the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. However, this will not lead to a material change in the assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport (see response to REP4-122: B4 below for further detail) as the information has already been included and is considered to fit for purpose and proportionate for the ES.	

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		detail in Appendix K of our Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No change. Please see Appendix B4 of Natural England's Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. Please see our Deadline 4 submission [REP4-122] for further information. Deadline 6 & End of Examination Position The Applicant has provided the requested further information [REP5-040] on sediment transport pathways offshore of 35km along the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, and on/around Dogger Bank, which is welcome. This issue is therefore resolved.	The Applicants note that there is no 'new' information relating to bed mobility in the Array Areas that will be available with the timeframe of examination. This is because any new reports must be informed by data derived from ongoing surveys. 'New' information will, of course, inform the final designs for the Projects and will inform the Cable Burial Risk Assessments (CBRAs) as they are updated prior to construction. Natural England will have the opportunity to review the final CBRAs when the final Cable Statement that is submitted in fulfilment of condition 15(1)(i) of Deemed Marine Licence 1 within the **Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (Revision 8)** [REP5-002] and those submitted to discharge similar conditions included within each of the further Deemed Marine Licences. Deadline 7 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement	
B10	We consider the beach elevation change data presented in the ES from 2008-2015 to be out of date. More recent beach/shore platform elevation change data should be sought and analysed (alongside the older data collected), to inform the cable burial/asset integrity assessment and assess coastal vulnerability through the lifetime of the Projects. (7.5, 7.8). Whilst there is a commitment to carry out beach profile change monitoring if trenchless technique exit pits are located within the intertidal area, we advise that beach profile change monitoring should be carried out regardless to confirm beach recovery and support predictions regarding impacts to Holderness cliffs, and also monitor cable burial success and asset integrity over the lifetime of the Projects. (7.8).	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. We are satisfied that information provided in AS-116 (10.38 Coastal Change Technical Note Rev 01) is sufficient to demonstrate that the cables will be buried at sufficient depth to prevent exposure for the lifetime of the project. See Appendix B1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
B11	We advise that the modelling for changes to the wave and tidal regime should be updated to reflect the Option 1 turbine layout and removal of gravity base foundations for turbines from the project envelope. The outputs of the more realistic layout	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B6) for a view on the WCS modelled for wave and tidal current effects.	

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	out scenario (Option 1) should be carried through to the assessment. (7.8, 7.8.8.3).	No Change. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Applicants have updated the Marine Physical Processes Modelling [REP2-018] to reflect the changes in the Project Design Envelope (i.e. removal of GBS foundations and reduction in the number of offshore platforms). The updated wave and hydrodynamic modelling has also been carried out for baseline, Option 1 and Option 2. We advise that all relevant documents such as relevant ES chapters be updated to reflect this. We also continue to advise that Option 1 is a more realistic layout scenario and should be carried through to such updated assessment. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Furthermore, updates to ES documents are required to resolve, we will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7.	The **Marine Physical Processes Modelling Revision (Revision 2)** [AS-135] was updated in line with **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and accepted into Examination on 21st January 2025. Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:B11): 'The updated modelling based on the removal of *GBS foundations does not change the results of the assessment outlined in* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Processes*** *[APP-080] (see section 8.7.4.1. and 8.7.4.2.) as the receptors sensitivity to changes in wave and tidal regime remain the same (negligible) and while the scale of the impact is slightly lower, this does not result in a material change to the assessment of magnitude of impact, and it remains low. Therefore, there is no change to the significance of effect which is negligible.'* End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
B12	We advise that Table 8-20 of [APP-080] should be revised using the 95% confidence level from the revised National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping project. Cliff erosion is relevant in terms of reviewing whether construction impacts have altered baseline cliff erosion rates. Therefore, this should be done as part of the post construction monitoring rather than strictly being needed for the ES.	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. See Appendix B1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 & End of Examination Position Issue progressed. Natural England welcome that updated coastal erosion predictions have been provided. We advise that these updates are included in the updated ES documents to be provided at Deadline 7. See Appendix B4 of Natural England's Deadline 4 submission for further detail.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B23). Deadline 2 The Applicants will update the **Coastal Erosion Rate Technical Note** (AS-116) in relation to the publication of NCERM2 for submission at Deadline 3. Deadline 4 An updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7 which will address this comment. Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: B12): *'The Applicants confirm the updated coastal erosion predictions will be included in the update of* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080], to be submitted at Deadline 7.'* End of Examination Position	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7. the Applicants consider this matter to be closed out. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B13	The ES identifies a significant secondary wave shadow component from the south to south-south-west (S-SSW) where the spatial extent, and potential impacts have not been assessed. The Applicants should provide details of the spatial extent of any wave shadow effects extending from DBS into Dogger Bank A. The implications of these wave shadow effects for the marine physical environment over the lifetime of the Projects should also be considered. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. We continue to advise that it would be useful if the Applicants could provide the revised model output for waves approaching south to south-south-west (S-SSW). This will help inform understanding of the potential for in-combination effects. Deadline 3 No change. As noted in Appendix L of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission, it would be useful to include waves approaching from the south/southwest in the wave modelling assessment. This would help inform understanding of potential overlapping effects extending towards nearby OWFs (i.e. Dogger Bank A). Moreover, cumulative and project-specific changes to the wave climate over the lifetime of the Project need to be fully considered. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 & 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants agreed that a wave shadow could also form to the north of the arrays for waves approaching from the south and south-southwest (RR-039: B24) They have stated that *'it is likely that waves that approach the Projects from the south would also approach Dogger Bank A and B from the south at the same time. Hence, the wave shadows for all the wind farms would be to the north, with no potential for overlap and generation of cumulative effects.* *Also, the changes in significant wave height induced by the Projects wind turbines are predicted to be so small at less than 1.5% of baseline conditions, that cumulative changes to wave regime with Dogger Bank A and B will not be significant (see section 8.8.4 of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] for further details)'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants reiterated the response provided above and presented the wave modelling methodology, including wave directions, during the Marine Physical Processes ETG held on 11th September 2023 to provide an opportunity for Natural England to feedback and advise through the Evidence Plan Process. The response to the meeting minutes (found in **Appendix F - Non-Statutory Consultation and Engagement** [APP-043]) did not include any advice to consider waves approaching from south to south-south-west. Deadline 4 As per the response given to REP3-058: A6 in Table 2-15 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088], the Applicants have considered the effects on bedload sediment transport due to changes in tidal regime (and bed shear stress) in section 8.7.4.4. of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080]. The Applicants have provided further consideration of long-term sediment transport pathways in their response to Natural England's Relevant Representations RR-039:B1, detailed in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048]. In summary, the changes to bed shear stress are <3% of the baseline. This magnitude of change will not significantly change the seabed composition or mobility. The sensitivity of Dogger Bank as a geomorphological and geological receptor to changes in sediment transport due to changes in tidal regime is negligible as Dogger Bank is not an active marine bedform (e.g. a sand bank), it is a remnant glacial landscape overlain with a thin veneer of	

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			sand. Its designation as an 'Annex I Sand Bank' is related to seabed habitat classification and not to the physical processes responsible for its formation and persistence in a marine environment. Deadline 5 The Applicants maintain their position as set out at Deadline 4, no new information on this topic is intended to be submitted. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as set out at Deadline 4 and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
B14	The potential impacts of extending North Turnpikes Road to the beach/cliffs are unclear. We advise that further details are provided on the emergency intertidal access design including coastal morphology and sensitive habitats that may be affected by its presence. Any environmental impacts associated with its construction, operation, and subsequent removal should be fully considered and assessed. (7.5).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix B2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. As outlined in [REP3-028], the Applicant does not intend to finalise the design of the emergency intertidal access or provide a pollution contingency plan in advance of receiving consent and / or appointing a Principal Contractor. We continue to advise that a full outline contingency plan should be included at the point of consent. Deadline 5 No change - we maintain our previous advice. See Natural England's response to ExQ2 MCP.2.1 in Appendix K5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. Whilst we understand from the Applicant's response to ExQ2 [REP5-036] that they	The Applicants direct Natural England to **Chapter 5 Project Description** [APP-071], paragraph 247 (RR-039: B25): *'This access would only be used in the event of a construction emergency, such as a frac-out, whereby drilling fluid is released to the ground surface during trenchless crossing installation. A Satellite Temporary Construction Compound would be located at the end of Turnpike Road where there is an existing boat storage area. This would be returned to its current use on completion of the works at the Landfall Zone.' As shown on sheet 1 of the* ***Works Plan (Onshore) (Revision 3)*** *[PDA-003] Works no. 9A/B shows where the emergency beach access would be located on the beach, if required by the Contractor. It would be located in the intertidal between MHWS and MLWS. The Applicants can confirm that any vehicle required would track along the sand, a temporary haul road would not be constructed. As such, no physical works are proposed that are associated with the access prescribed by Works 9A/B.* *Works No. 10A/B (above MHWS) include the highly dynamic area of land immediately adjacent to the eroding cliff face. This is where the Applicants propose to install an access ramp shoreward of MHWS providing access to, but not extending into, the intertidal area. This ramp would be suitable for temporary vehicular access to the beach. The access ramp would be designed when the contractor is appointed and would, as a worst case, remain in place for the duration of the construction works. The access point is currently used by members of the public and has been previously used as a boat launch but has eroded considerably since habitat surveys were completed between May and November 2023. There is currently no permanent access ramp. Appendix C of* ***Appendix 18-2 Habitat Survey Report*** *[APP-143], includes the results of the Habitat Survey. Sheet 1 of the map identifies moderate quality Maritime Cliff and Slope habitat (s2a) in this location. As detailed in Section 18.10.4.2.1, paragraph 73 of* ***Appendix 18-10 Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy*** *[APP-157] 'All intertidal habitats within the emergency beach access route [will be retained] (though it should be noted that protective matting may be installed within this area. This area will be monitored should emergency access be required). Should that habitat still be present the Applicant would propose to protect it from any crossing vehicles with suitable matting.' The Applicants can confirm an assessment of the potential temporary impact to this habitat from use of an emergency beach access have not been included in* ***Chapter 18 Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology*** *[APP-140]. Therefore, section 18.6.1.3, Construction Impact 3 will be updated and mitigation will be confirmed as installation of suitable protective matting should the*	

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		will be updating the OCoCP to include that the Drilling Fluid Management Plan would be agreed with relevant bodies including Natural England, we maintain our previous advice. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant maintains their position [REP6-051]. We maintain our previous advice.	*habitat still be present prior to construction. Any mitigation added to the chapter, to align with the wording in* ***Appendix 18-10 Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy*** *[APP-157] will also be updated in the* ***Outline Ecological Management Plan (OEMP)*** *[APP-235] and both updated documents would be submitted in late November. As no construction works are proposed below MHWS for this access no updates to any offshore documents are proposed.'* Deadline 4 The **Outline Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) (Revision 3)** [REP1-025] submitted at Deadline 1 was updated to include a commitment for the Drilling Fluid Management Plan (which will describe the procedure and measures for dealing with drilling fluid from trenchless crossings) to include details and the design of the emergency intertidal access design. This Drilling Fluid Break Out Management Plan will be developed post-consent as part of the detailed CoCP(s) approved under Development Consent Order (DCO) Requirement 19, upon appointment of a Principal Contractor(s). This would be subject to approval by East Riding of Yorkshire Council in consultation with the Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Natural England, as required. As such paragraph 252 as referenced in Natural England's comment (amended to paragraph 254 in Revision 5 of **Chapter 18 Terrestrial Ecology** [REP2-019] submitted for Deadline 2), is unchanged. The Drilling Fluid Breakout Management Plan will include details and a design (for approval) of the Emergency Intertidal Access, which may require a temporary access ramp and / or ground protection matting shoreward of Mean High Water Springs to access over the cliff face. **Chapter 5 Project Description (Revision 3)** [REP1-009] was also updated for Deadline 1 to include additional details on the potential design of the emergency access. As stated in paragraph 253 of **Chapter 5 Project Description (Revision 3)** [REP1-009], as the cliff face is highly dynamic and constantly changing, the temporary access over the cliff would be designed when the Contractor is appointed to avoid abortive work at this stage. The Applicants do not therefore intend to finalise the design of the emergency intertidal access in advance of receiving consent and / or appointing a Principal Contractor. Should Natural England request further details of the design options these could be provided to Natural England at a later deadline but would be subject to change depending on the nature of the maritime cliff and slope habitat at the time of detailed design. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP5-062: MCP.2.1 in **The Applicants' Comments on the Responses to ExAQ2** [REP6-051] and repeated below for ease. *'The North Falls Outline Horizontal Directional Drill Method Statement and Contingency Plan (Rev 2) [REP5-026] document is mitigation for impacts associated with drilling beneath a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR). As detailed in section 2.4 'The HDD alignments pass under the Holland Haven Marshes SSSI and LNR and the Frinton Golf Club.' The landfall trenchless crossing, most likely Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD), included in the Application*	

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			for these Projects will not be located under any designated sites. Therefore, there is no potential impact, and the level of detail already provided is considered sufficient. *A detailed description of the Landfall Works including the methodology for a HDD is already included in section 5.6.2 of Chapter 5 – Project Description (Revision 3) [REP1-009]. In addition, a commitment to a Drilling Fluid Break Out Management Plan is already made, with details included in section 6.3.2.1 of the Outline Code of Construction Practice (Revision 4) [REP4-040] with a similar level of detail to this in the North Falls example. For example paragraph 172 includes a number of proposed mitigation measures should a break out occur. As detailed in para 174 'The exact specification for the contingency plan will be informed by further ground investigation and the specific design of the trenchless crossing and selected construction methodology.'* *For the Projects there is a requirement to cross a very small area of priority maritime cliff and slope habitat which is 'high sensitivity' to access the beach and is shown on Appendix C .1 A, section 1 (p.35) in Appendix 18-2 - Habitat Survey Report (Revision 2) [PDC-004]. The North Falls document does not include any description of how the beach would be accessed. A description has however been added for the Projects to Section 5.6.3 of Chapter 5 – Project Description (Revision 3) [REP1-009] in response to previous comments on this matter.* *Until a contractor is selected and this design is progressed, post consent there is not more mitigation detail for the design of the beach access, at this stage. This is secured through Development Consent Order (DCO) Requirement 19 and must be agreed with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) in consultation with Natural England, when the Contractor has considered the ground considers closer to the start of construction as they are constantly changing due to coastal erosion.* *As detailed previously 'Any maritime cliff and slope habitat present would be protected from any crossing vehicles with suitable ground protection matting and it would be monitored during construction to ensure the habitat is not damaged.' The Applicants consider this and the fact the access would only be required during the HDD works, up to 18 months sufficient mitigation to protect the habitat. Which should be noted, is not vegetated but an eroding cliff environment.'* Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position stated at Deadline 6 above and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
B15	Jack up barges, other vessels, equipment, and infrastructure may be used for trenchless landfall exit works during the different development phases. The Applicants should consider and assess all potential impacts to seabed and coastal morphology that may arise due to trenchless landfall works during the lifetime of the Projects. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B26): *'The equipment used at the landfall exit will only have a potential effect on seabed and coastal morphology, where it is temporarily sitting on the seabed. This would be restricted to jack-up vessels if they are used. Floating equipment will have no effect. The potential effect would be to create a small hole, which would over time, become shallower and less distinct due to infilling with mobile seabed sediments.* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] concluded that the significance of effect on seabed morphology of using six jack-up vessels at each of 200 small wind turbines and nine*	

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		No Change. Whilst we acknowledge that in [AS-141], the short trenchless crossing at landfall has been removed from the proposed works, thus avoiding the need for exit pits in the intertidal area; further assessment of the potential impacts from landfall works is required. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. The Applicant has stated in [REP4-088] that the change to project design (removal of short trenchless crossing at landfall) results in a change to the receptors assessed and that such assessment in relation to landfall works will be updated in a landfall technical note to be submitted at Deadline 5, and included in the updated ES chapter to be submitted at Deadline 7. We will provide comment accordingly. Deadline 6 No change. Natural England are unclear if the landfall technical note referred to at Deadline 5 was submitted as intended. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant has clarified [REP6-052] that an updated version of Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7, and will include the updated landfall assessment work as detailed in the Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall [REP4-088] report issued at Deadline 5. We will provide comment accordingly.	*offshore platforms would be negligible. Given this, the relatively small number of jack-up vessels that would be used at the landfall exit point (maximum of 3 vessels simultaneously during exit pit preparation) means the significance would also be negligible.* *However, the Applicants are in process of preparing a change request relating to a number of design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request will be supported by the **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES and RIAA. This information will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of the change request in early January. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts. However, although the quantum of impact will be reduced the significance of effect will remain the same'.* Deadline 4 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:B15): *'The assessment in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] considers the effects of landfall construction activities on suspended sediment concentrations and bedload sediment transport (see section 8.7.3.4 and 8.7.3.9). This assessment was based on a trenchless technique for cable installation at the landfall with exit pits in the intertidal zone as the worst case scenario. Changes to the project design outlined in **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] results in a reduced worse case as the exit pits will be located in the subtidal area. This results in a change to the receptors assessed. The assessment in relation to landfall works will therefore be updated in a landfall technical note to be submitted at Deadline 5, and included in the updated ES chapter to be submitted at Deadline 7.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants confirm that an updated version of **Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7 and will include the updated landfall assessment work as detailed in the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP4-088] report issued at Deadline 5. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B15): *'The Applicants confirm that section 7 of the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] report issued at Deadline 5 included the referenced updated landfall assessment with regards to the subtidal trenchless exit pits.'* End of Examination Position	

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			Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
B16	Clarification is needed on what material will be used to backfill trenches for landfall cable installation activities if the excavated material has been redistributed. We advise that sediment should be stored in such a way that it cannot be washed away. (7.8, 8.18).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 No Change. Whilst we acknowledge that in [AS-141], the short trenchless crossing at landfall has been removed from the proposed works, thus avoiding the need for exit pits in the intertidal area; further assessment of the potential for sediment to be lost should excavation at the exit pit location be required. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. As stated in [REP4-088], the Applicant will be submitting a technical note detailing further modelling undertaken which is focussed on wave generated currents given they are the principal driver of sediment movement in the vicinity of the Projects' landfall location. We will provide further comment accordingly. Deadline 6 No change. The Applicant discusses only excavated exit pit material in the latest coastal processes assessment [REP5-040], not cable trenching	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B27): '*The Applicants are in process of preparing a change request relating to a number of design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request will be supported by the **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES and RIAA. This information will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of the change request in early January. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts.* *The change proposed of relevance to this comment is the removal of the requirement for short trenchless cable installation at landfall. Should this change be accepted by the Examining Authority (ExA), no works within the intertidal area would occur for the Projects and therefore no requirement for backfilling of intertidal trenches. Should this change not be accepted, the Applicants will consider further options for storage of material (for example storage of excavated material on barges) from any landfall exit pits in consultation with stakeholders'.* Deadline 4 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:B16): '*A trenchless technique will be used for cable installation at the landfall with exit pits located in the subtidal zone. Seabed preparation may be required at the exit pits that could include excavation or levelling. The preferred dredging methodology is unknown at this stage as detailed design of the landfall is ongoing.* *Following changes to the project design and removal of a short trenchless technique at the landfall, the Applicants provided an update to the worst case scenario and effect significance for the marine physical environment (see Table 42 of **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141]). It was concluded there was no change, and the significance of effect remained negligible for changes to suspended sediment concentration and transport due to export cable installation and cable installation activities at the landfall.* *The subtidal excavations pits have not changed in size, nor has the construction timescale changed, which means the magnitude of impact remains the same (negligible). Whilst their location has changed*	

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		excavated material. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*(they are now subtidal), the Holderness Inshore MCZ and Smithic Bank were already considered as receptors in the initial assessment, so there is no material change in the sensitivity of the receptor.'* Deadline 5 The Applicants have submitted the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] at Deadline 5 which demonstrates the limited effects that cable protection in the nearshore environment would have. The modelling is focused on wave generated currents given they are the principal driver of sediment movement in the vicinity of the Projects' landfall location. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B16): '*The Applicants note that to date, this point has been raised by Natural England solely on the topic of material excavated from the proposed exit pits, as considered in section 7 of the Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall [REP5-040] report issued at Deadline 5.* *Notwithstanding this, the Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP6-072: B8 in Table 2-18 of this document.*' *REP6-072: B8* 1. *While the exact location of the proposed exit pits cannot be confirmed at this time, the Applicants confirmed in response to REP5-061: C2 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] that the subtidal exit pits would not be located within 350m seaward of mean low water springs. This commitment was included in the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] submitted at Deadline 6.* 2. *As previously stated, the excavated material would be stored alongside the exit pits. As far as possible this material would be used to backfill the exit pits, with the remaining backfill expected to complete naturally. There is currently no intention or expectation to import materials to complete the backfill. If post-installation monitoring confirms that backfill is incomplete, then the Applicants would discuss with stakeholders an appropriate methodology for this work, including what materials to be used if this is required.* End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that sufficient information on this matter has been presented through the Examination phase of the Projects for this matter to be closed out and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

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B17	Removal or modification of sandwaves within the OECC and array areas could adversely affect nearby sandbanks, seabed topography, and affect flow and sediment transport patterns. All efforts should be made to avoid areas of sandwaves and/or minimise the need for sandwave levelling/pre-sweeping by micro-routing. If possible, dredged material should be placed to aid natural infilling of trenches. Best practice should be followed to assess and minimise potential impacts to sandwave/sandbank systems. The proposed pre- and post-construction monitoring should be used to assess geomorphological recovery after cable installation. (7.5, 7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. The Applicant has said that in commitment C089 of the Commitments Register, that cable route selection/micro-siting will help avoid areas of seabed that are challenging e.g. sandwaves. Can the Applicant confirm if this commitment will enable reduction of the MDS for sandwave levelling? In line with our advice in Appendix B4 to our Deadline 4 submission, we advise that the Applicant still needs to more accurately assess bedform migration direction and rates. The Applicant has also stated [REP3-028] that they can commit to depositing sediment on like sediment (within Dogger Bank SAC) and has indicated that an updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-028] to reflect such changes. We will provide further comment accordingly, but highlight that as with other developments currently in Examination which are impacting on Annex I sandbanks, commitments to deposit adjacent to and updrift of the sandbank using a fall/down pipe is also required to fully mitigate impacts. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. Whilst stronger commitments to mitigation are required, Natural England is satisfied with the assessment for sandwave clearance in the export cable corridor in relation to suspended	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B28): '*The Applicants agree that removal or modification of sandwaves could potentially interfere with sediment transport pathways that supply sediment to the local sandbank systems.* *However, the dynamic nature of the sandwaves in this area means that any direct changes to the seabed associated with sandwave levelling are likely to recover over a short period of time due to natural sand transport pathways. This conceptual evidence-based assessment is supported on the findings of a review of the evidence base into the recovery of sandwaves at the similarly dynamic areas of Race Bank and Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton (HHW) SAC (ABPmer, 201810).* *To install parts of the array and export cables for Race Bank Offshore Wind Farm, the crests of sandwaves were reduced in elevation. Multibeam echosounder monitoring was completed of pre- (2015/2016), during (2017) and post- (2018) sandwave levelling to assess the level of disturbance and the rate of natural recovery (restoration) of seabed morphology. Nine areas were chosen (seven array cables routes and two areas along the offshore cable corridors) where significant sediment mobility was expected. The results showed that along most of the nine study areas, the seabed had completely or nearly completely recovered to pre-construction levels (greater than 75% recovery of sandwaves in all areas).* *Work done by ABPmer (201810) across HHW SAC for Norfolk Vanguard / Boreas Offshore Wind Farms provides another suitable analogy. ABPmer investigated sandwave properties (height, wavelength, asymmetry, mobility and migration characteristics) and the sediment transport potential. The results showed that the sandwave area is in an active and highly dynamic environment, governed by flow speeds, water depth and sediment supply, all of which are conducive to the development and maintenance of sandbanks. Therefore, despite the disturbance to sandwaves intersecting the cable corridor, the HHW SAC sandbank system would remain undisturbed as new sandwaves will continue to be formed. They concluded that the overall form and functioning of any sandwave, or the SAC sandbank system, is not disrupted by levelling of the sandwaves.* *Similar physical and sedimentary processes apply to the area of sandwaves along the Projects 'Offshore Export Cable Corridor. The driving forces (tidal currents) and sediment supply regime will be like the sandwaves in Race Bank and HHW SAC (as it is for all areas with sandwaves).* *Hence, the same principles of recovery would apply. ABPmer concluded that the estimated time for the cable trenches and the seabed levelling to be naturally infilled, and for sand waves to recovery would be in the order of a few days to a year.* *Also, they showed that the governing sediment transport processes within the HHW SAC occur at a much larger scale than the proposed bed levelling works. Therefore, these processes will not be disrupted by the localised bed levelling. The same can be said for the sandwaves in the Projects' Offshore Export Cable Corridor, and so there is no reason to believe that the sand waves would not recover in a similar fashion and at a similar rate, without upsetting the bigger landscape scale processes across the sand waves.*	

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		sediment concentrations. See Appendix B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. The Applicant discusses only excavated exit pit material in the latest coastal processes assessment [REP5-040], not cable trenching excavated material. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicant has indicated [REP6-052] that they will include depositing like sediment on like sediment in an updated Commitments Register to be submitted at Deadline 7. -The Applicant has committed [REP6-044] to providing a plan as an Appendix to the Final Cable Statement(s) (should sand wave levelling be required) which will provide details on sandwave levelling, deposition, and recovery. -With regards to micro-routing, sandwave crossing and cable installation, the Cable Statement [REP6-044] has been updated to clarify that route selection and micro-siting of the cables will take place, sandwave crossing will occur at an angle as close to 90 degrees to minimise dredge volumes and that cable installation should occur as soon as possible after levelling, in line with best practice, which is welcomed. -The Applicants have also committed to pre and post construction geophysical surveys in the IPMP, but consider that there is insufficient information available to define hypotheses as a detailed sand wave characterisation study would be required which will be undertaken post-consent. We advise that the provision of a sandwave characterisation study should be explicitly included in the IPMP and secured in the DCO. -There is no change to the Applicant's position on the use of a fall pipe for depositing dredged sediment and	*As a variety of sediment types are present on the Dogger Bank, the Applicants believe that stipulating material to be disposed must be placed on the same material type cannot be guaranteed and would be difficult and onerous to apply in reality. Dredging, particularly for the linear aspects of the Projects such as the subsea cable installations, may occur over a variety of sediment types to allow installation to occur. The resultant mixed cargo could not be disposed of on any single, specific material type. Hence, compliance with such a condition would require the dredge, transit and deposition of very high numbers of potentially very limited cargoes of specific sediment types for specific disposal on patches of that same sediment type. The dredge, transit and disposal and the 'stop-start' nature of dredging mean that this would be highly time consuming and inefficient. Given the practical difficulties associated with this request, the Applicants do not agree that this should be added as conditions of the DML.* *Across the course of the pre-construction phase of the Projects, the Applicants will seek to minimise sandwave levelling require for cable installation'.* Deadline 3 See the Applicants' response to this matter in Table 2-7, REP2-065:3.2 - REP2-065:3.6 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. The Applicants note commitment C089 in the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] which states: *Route selection and micro-siting of the cables will be used to avoid areas of seabed that pose a significant challenge to their installation where practicable, including for example areas of sand waves and megaripples. This will minimise the requirement for seabed preparation (levelling) and the associated seabed disturbance.* This commitment is secured in the **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-039]. In addition, the Applicants have committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment within the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC, thus ensuring, as Natural England have requested, that sediment both remains within the system and sandbank recovery is enabled. The final routing of the Projects array, Inter-Platform and Offshore Export Cables will be informed by the final CBRA, which will form part of the final Cable Statement. The final Cable Statement, as secured under Conditions 15 (1)(c) of DMLs 1 and 2, Conditions 13 (1)(c) of DMLs 3 and 4 and Condition 11 (1)(c) of DML 5, will be required to be submitted to and approved by the MMO prior to any licensed activities for the Projects being undertaken. In addition, the Applicants have committed to undertaking post-construction monitoring activities to determine the recovery of sandwaves / sandbank habitat, as detailed in Table 1-2 of the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)** [REP2-043]. Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: B17):	

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		updrift of the sandwave - we maintain our advice on this.	*'The Applicants confirm that commitment Co89 would enable reduction of the volumes of sediment proposed for dredging as part of sand wave levelling, through the avoidance of areas where sand wave levelling is required where technically feasible. However, these reductions can only be made post-consent as that is when this mitigation is to be applied. The final details of the application of this mitigation measure will be demonstrated through the documents that the Applicants submit to discharge Conditions 15(a)(iii) and 15(i) in Deemed Marine Licence 1 (as repeated across the remaining Deemed Marine Licences) in the* ***Draft Development Consent Order (Revision 8)*** *[document reference 3.1].* *Regarding the comment on assessment of bedform migration direction and rates, see the Applicants response to REP4-122: B4 in* ***Table 2-17*** *of this document.* *As per the Applicants' response to REP2-069: B45 within* ***The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents*** *[REP3-028] the Applicants await evidence from Natural England that fall pipes are equipped on the kinds of vessels that would be used to complete the dredging required to deliver the Projects. In the Applicants view, such equipment is not available on such vessels.* *The Applicants will give further consideration to this request if Natural England can provide a demonstration to the contrary. The Applicants cannot commit to delivering mitigation that they do not regard as technically feasible. The Applicants cannot comment on what other projects think is or isn't feasible. The Applicants note that Natural England were asked to provide a response to an ISH5 Action Point on this topic, but did not provide a direct response to this question (AP31 within Action Points from Issue Specific Hearing 5 (ISH5) held on 10 April 2025 [EV10-002]).* *The Applicants note that should material be deposited updrift of a dredging site then there is every possibility that this material may move to re-fill the area before any relevant works are completed requiring further, remedial dredging activity. As a result, the Applicants assert that following this request could result in avoidable ecological impacts.* <u>Deadline 6</u> The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP5-054: B2 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]: *' The Applicants provide the following comments on each mitigation measure suggested below under the headings used by Natural England.* • *Depositing like sediment on like sediment.* *This commitment will be added to the next update of the* ***Commitments Register (Revision 2)*** *[REP2-025], to be submitted at Deadline 7.* • *A fall/down pipe is used (should a trailing suction hopper dredger be used) to minimise sediment dispersal.* *As previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in* ***The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)*** *[REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible*	

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			and, as such, can make no commitments to delivering it. Having reviewed the submissions made by Outer Dowsing into their examination, the Applicants note that this project does not appear to have made any commitment to the use of a fall pipe. • *An outline sand wave levelling, deposition and recovery plan should be provided as either a standalone document or as part of the Cable Statement /Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment (see Table 2 for further detail).* *The Applicants have noted in the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-050] that a plan for sand wave levelling will be provided as an Appendix to the Final Cable Statement(s) should sand wave levelling be required as part of the Projects.* • *Pre- and post-construction monitoring should be used to assess geomorphological recovery after cable installation (with management interventions identified).* *The Applicants have committed within the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 4)** (REP5-027) to pre-construction geophysical surveys to characterise seabed bed geomorphology (e.g. sand waves and sand banks) and post-construction geophysical surveys to monitor geomorphological change and seabed recovery. Within Appendix J of REP3-056, Natural England advises that "the hypotheses to be tested by the monitoring should be agreed as part of the IPMP" (NE ref 3 Table 1-2). Defining appropriate and measurable hypotheses requires:* • *A plan for sand wave levelling which will be provided as an Appendix to the Final Cable Statement(s) should sand wave levelling be required as part of the Projects.* • *The results of pre-construction monitoring as defined in **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 4)** (REP5-027).* *Therefore, the Applicants consider the In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) in its current format is appropriate at this stage of the development of the Projects and note there will be opportunities for Natural England to engage and agree the details of the hypotheses in relation to sand wave levelling in the post consent stage of the Projects.'* <u>Deadline 7</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B17): *'The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP6-072: B7 Table 2-18 of this document. The Applicants direct Natural England to the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] submitted at Deadline 6 which contains updated mitigation proposals.'* *REP6-072:B7* *'Changes in bed shear stress over the operational lifetime of the projects have been considered in the updated assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport in section 8.7.4.4 of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [document reference 7.8].* *The Applicants have committed to pre- and post-construction monitoring of the seabed through the collection of geophysical survey data as outlined in the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)***	

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			[document reference 8.23]. As the seabed is dynamic and ever changing, the pre-construction baseline will be set using the most up to date survey data which will be acquired post-consent as part of pre-construction surveys. This data can then be assessed in terms of changing seabed sediment composition and morphology to define the scope of further post-construction monitoring. *The Applicants welcome the advice to construct a conceptual morphodynamic model of bedload sediment transport and have included this in the pre-construction scope of the updated* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 8.23] submitted at Deadline 7.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that all reasonable mitigation and monitoring proposals have been committed to by the Applicants with regards to potential sand wave levelling within **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] and the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)** [REP7-115]. With regards to the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it.	
B18	Model results show 'wave shadows' with potential reductions in significant wave height of up to 0.7m, with the largest effects due to the offshore platforms in the Array Areas. The implications of the predicted changes to wave climate/height over the lifespan of the Projects need to be fully considered in terms of impacts to the seabed sediment composition, sediment mobility, and seabed morphology of the Dogger Bank SAC. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. Whilst we will be providing our full comments on the Change Request at Deadline 3, we note that the maximum significant wave height reduction values do not appear to have changed in the revised Marine Physical Processes Modelling Technical Report (Rev 02) [AS-136]. We seek clarification from the Applicants on whether the wave modelling has been revised in line with the changes to the Project Design Envelope. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Applicants have updated the Marine Physical Processes Modelling [AS-136, REP2-018] to reflect the changes in the Project Design Envelope. This partially addresses our initial concern. However, we wish to see consideration and assessment of wave shadow effects due to waves	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B29): *'For all scenarios, the greatest change in wave height is a reduction of up to 0.7m. However, this only occurs immediately adjacent to (less than 100m) the offshore platforms which as a WCS creates a blockage effect over an area with a diameter of 65m. Hence, the footprint of this change is insignificant compared to the area of Dogger Bank SAC.* *The larger areas of Dogger Bank SAC are affected by maximum changes to wave height of between 0.04m and 0.06m. These are less than 1.5% of baseline wave heights. It was concluded in* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] that tidal currents are the dominant driver of bedload sediment transport and seabed morphology (and in turn the biological communities) across the array areas, rather than waves'.* Deadline 4 As per the response given to REP3-058: A6 in Table 2-15 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088], the Applicants have considered the effects on bedload sediment transport due to changes in tidal regime (and bed shear stress) in section 8.7.4.4. of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080]. The Applicants have provided further consideration of long-term sediment transport pathways in their response to Natural England's Relevant Representations RR-039:B1, detailed in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations (including Appendices A - F, and I)** [AS-048]. In summary, the changes to bed shear stress are <3% of the baseline. This magnitude of change will not significantly change the seabed composition or mobility.	

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		approaching from the south/southwest and cumulative effects with nearby OWFs (e.g. Dogger Bank A). See Appendix L of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change - we maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant maintains their position [REP6-051]. We maintain our previous advice.	The sensitivity of Dogger Bank as a geomorphological and geological receptor to changes in sediment transport due to changes in tidal regime is negligible as Dogger Bank is not an active marine bedform (e.g. a sand bank), it is a remnant glacial landscape overlain with a thin veneer of sand. Its designation as an 'Annex I Sand Bank' is related to seabed habitat classification and not to the physical processes responsible for its formation and persistence in a marine environment. Deadline 5 The Applicants maintain their position as set out at Deadline 4, no new information on this topic is intended to be submitted. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as set out at Deadline 4 and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
B19	Hydrodynamic model results show lower current speeds (shadow effects) along the western boundary of the Arrays, but also increased current speeds inside the Arrays. Similarly, there are shadow areas in the difference plots for bed shear stress with areas of reduced bed shear stress adjacent to the western DBS W Array boundary and to the west and east of the DBS E Array boundary, but with areas of increased bed shear stress within the Arrays. The implications of predicted changes to current speeds and bed shear stress over the lifespan of the Projects need to be fully considered in terms of seabed sediment composition, sediment mobility, and seabed morphology of the Dogger Bank SAC. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. We continue to advise that the Applicants needs to consider how the predicted changes (reductions and increases) in tidal current speeds and bed shear stress will affect patterns of erosion and deposition and seabed morphology within and adjacent to the arrays over the 30 year project lifespan. Furthermore, consideration should be given to changes in seabed heterogeneity over the lifespan of the project. Deadline 3 & 4: No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B30): '*Section 8.7.4.4 in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] provided an assessment of potential changes to bedload sediment transport and seabed morphology based on the results of the tidal current/bed shear stress modelling presented in **Appendix 8-3 Marine Physical Processes Modelling Technical Report** [APP-084]. Changes to the tidal regime are likely to be the main driver of any changes in bedload sediment transport and as a result, seabed morphology. The conclusions were that the near-field magnitude of impact on bedload sediment transport regime and seabed morphology would be low and the far-field magnitude of impact would be negligible. The predicted zone of influence for the Array Areas on bedload sediment transport regime and seabed morphology includes Dogger Bank. The section concluded that significance of the effect on Dogger Bank would be negligible*'. Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided above and in **The Applicants Response to Written Representations** [REP2-057] which are reiterated below: *'Detailed review of the model outputs for bed shear stress show that most changes are localised within 1km of the individual turbines and both an increase and decrease in bed shear stress occurs which at a local scale offsets one another leading to no net change in sediment transport.* *At a more regional scale, there is a weak relationship between the morphology of the Dogger Bank and the changes in bed shear stress. Along the bank margins where the water deepens, there is an increase in bed shear stress due to the Projects which could theoretically mobilise coarser grains leading to*	

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		No change. We continue to advise that the Applicant needs to consider how the predicted changes (reductions and increases) in tidal current speeds and bed shear stress will affect patterns of erosion and deposition and seabed morphology within and adjacent to the arrays over the 30 year project lifespan. Furthermore, consideration should be given to changes in seabed heterogeneity over the lifespan of the project. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. The Applicant has given further consideration to bed shear stresses within the array areas in the latest coastal processes assessment [REP5-040]. However, the predicted changes in bed shear stress due to interactions with Project infrastructure need to be used to assess potential changes in seabed sediment composition and distribution, sediment dynamics, seabed morphology over the lifetime of the Projects. The influence of waves should also be considered for those locations above the wave base. These results will also need to be considered in terms of depositing like-for-like dredged sediment back into the SAC [REP4-051]. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No Change. The Applicant has indicated [REP6-052] they will provide an updated assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport over the operational lifetime of the Projects in an updated version of Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. We will provide comment accordingly.	*erosion. However, the maximum modelled change in bed shear stress is 0.02Nm2 which would not significantly change the grain size of sediment that could be mobilised. For example, the threshold to mobilise fine sand is 0.157Nm2 and the threshold to mobilise medium sand is 0.195Nm2. The difference in bed shear stress required to mobilise these two grain size fractions is 0.04Nm2. Therefore, a maximum change in bed shear stress of on02Nm2 would not significantly change the potential for sediment to be transported having limited to no effect on sediment transport pathways. Once the Projects have been constructed, the change in tidal regime will be the same for the duration of the operation phase. Therefore, there will be no additional changes to bed shear stress over the lifespan of the Projects that could manifest in changes to sediment transport pathways. As a worst case, if long term changes did occur that led to erosion along the Dogger Bank margins resulting in a reduction in sediment supply to the northwest (as residual sediment transport is from the southeast to northwest), there would be no wider impacts as there are no morphological receptors or other projects located to the northwest of the Array Areas.'* The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided in response to RR-039: B32 in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations [AS-048]** and reiterated below: *The principal receptors with respect to the marine physical environment are coastal or marine features with an inherent geological or geomorphological value or function which may be affected by the Projects. As the conservation objectives of SACs and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are driven by their ecological functioning, they are not considered as receptors for the marine physical environment and are assessed in the relevant chapters. However, a designated site may have a morphological component. For example, the Dogger Bank SAC comprises part of the Dogger Bank which is a topographic high and a geomorphological feature. Therefore, Dogger Bank itself is included as a receptor in this assessment, but not the Dogger Bank SAC. Potential effects on the Dogger Bank SAC are detailed in **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046].* It should also be noted that the Dogger Bank SAC was previously included as a receptor in the Projects Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), but was amended following feedback received from Natural England regarding the consideration of SACs in the Benthic Ecology and Physical Processes ETG held on 29th January 2024 (see **Consultation Report Appendix F - Non-Statutory Consultation and Engagement** [APP-043] for further context).' Deadline 6 The Applicants will provide an updated assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport over the operation lifetime of the Projects in the updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point 19 of this table. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July	

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			2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
B20	The potential for cumulative effects at landfall due to overlapping construction activities between DBS and Dogger Bank D should be considered and assessed. (8.8.3.2).	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 No change. This has not been addressed in the Change Request documents. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 & 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B31 & B58): '*The Applicants agree that construction of the landfall for the Projects has the potential for a temporal overlap with construction of the Dogger Bank D landfall (which will start no earlier than 2027), which could lead to a cumulative effect.* *It is highly unlikely that the landfall activities for the two wind farms would occur at the same time. Also, the locations of the landfall construction activities, and potentially the types of activities that may occur, are likely to be different. The Projects' landfall will be installed using trenchless techniques with an offshore exit point at least 50m from the Holderness cliffs. As noted in section 7.2.3.1.2 of the Dogger Bank D Scoping Report, a variety of methods could be adopted for that project which are likely to involve one or more cofferdams and / or the use of Horizontal Direction Drill (HDD). If HDD is used for Dogger Bank D, it is highly unlikely that the offshore exit point would be close enough to the Projects offshore exit point for any disturbances to overlap. Also, it is unlikely that the disturbances caused by cofferdam installation for Dogger Bank D and the trenchless installation activities for the Projects would overlap in space.* *Hence, cumulative effects in relation to changes in suspended sediment concentration and transport due to landfall installation are not expected.* *The Applicants are in process of preparing a change request relating to a number of design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request will be supported by the **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES and RIAA. This information will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of the change request in early January. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts.* *The change proposed of relevance to this comment is the removal of the requirement for short trenchless cable installation at landfall. Should this change be accepted by the ExA, no works within the intertidal area would occur for the Projects and therefore no potential for cumulative effects with any intertidal works proposed by Dogger Bank D'.* '*The Scoping Report for Dogger Bank D publicly released following the submission of the Projects **Draft DCO** [APP-027] Application in June 2024, does not state the potential location or indicative proportions of any cable protection measures to be used within that projects offshore export cable corridor. As such, there is insufficient information available at this time to include Dogger Bank D in the Projects cumulative assessment.'*	

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			Deadline 4 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided in responses above. **Project Change Request 1 - Offshore & Intertidal Works** [AS-141] (previously referred to as **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1]) was submitted in January 2024 and accepted into Examination by the Examining Authority in the same month. This assessment detailed the removal of potential works from the intertidal area. No further publicly available information regarding the project parameters for Dogger Bank D were available at the time of writing for **Project Change Request 1 - Offshore & Intertidal Works** [AS-141] or have been released following the submission of the above response. As such the Applicants maintain their position on this matter. End of Examination Position The Applicants note that the Dogger Bank D PEIR was published on 10th June 2025. Given that this only left just over two weeks to potentially incorporate any information from the DBD PEIR into the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] required by the ExA to be submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants did not update the ES to incorporate Dogger Bank D into the in-combination assessment. The Applicants also note that the DBD worst case design parameters could change in response to PEIR feedback and further environmental information could be considered as the project progresses. Note that the PDE includes foundation types for gravity-based structures and suction caissons, which were removed for the Projects' PDE. DBD will provide an updated and comprehensive in-combination assessment including their impacts when they submit a DCO application in 2026. The Applicants highlight the following text Natural England have confirmed will be included in their Deadline 8 Risk and Issues Log: *The DBD PEIR is now in the public domain through a Section 42 consultation. Whilst we welcome provision by the Applicants at Deadline 7 of the document '**The Applicant's Consideration of the Dogger Bank D Preliminary Environmental Information Report**' [REP7-133], Natural England are currently in the process of reviewing the PEIR and therefore cannot provide further comment on the appropriateness of [REP7-133] at this time. We therefore maintain the advice provided at Deadline 7 [REP7-154], that when determining the DBS windfarms, the Secretary of State considers Dogger Bank D in their HRA.*	
B21	Dogger Bank SAC should be included as a receptor in the Marine Physical Environment EIA. It should also be identified (along with other relevant designated sites) on Marine Physical Environment maps to inform understanding of potential impacts. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B32): '*The principal receptors with respect to the marine physical environment are coastal or marine features with an inherent geological or geomorphological value or function which may be affected by the Projects. As the conservation objectives of SACs and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are driven by their ecological functioning, they are not considered as receptors for the marine physical environment*	

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		No change. We advise that whilst marine physical processes receptors are primarily morphological or water column features, designated sites may also be affected by physical changes to their integrity and special features thus it is appropriate to identify them as receptors and to be included in the marine physical processes impact assessment. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP3-028] that whilst DB SAC was previously included as a receptor in PEIR, it was removed following consultation in an ETG meeting held on 29th Jan 2024. We have reviewed the minutes from this meeting and cannot see that it was discussed. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change. We continue advise that DB SAC should be included in the list of receptors and EIA in the next revision of ES Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] due to be submitted at Deadline 7. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*and are assessed in the relevant chapters. However, a designated site may have a morphological component. For example, the Dogger Bank SAC comprises part of the Dogger Bank which is a topographic high and a geomorphological feature. Therefore, Dogger Bank itself is included as a receptor in this assessment, but not the Dogger Bank SAC. Potential effects on the Dogger Bank SAC are detailed in* ***RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4*** *[APP-046]'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided above. It should also be noted that the Dogger Bank SAC was previously included as a receptor in the Projects Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), but was amended following feedback received from Natural England regarding the consideration of SACs in the Benthic Ecology and Physical Processes ETG held on 29th January 2024 (see **Consultation Report Appendix F - Non-Statutory Consultation and Engagement** [APP-043] for further context). Deadline 5 As per the response given in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: B21): *'As stated in the minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2024, during discussions of potential impacts upon the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Southern North Sea SAC Natural England noted that:* *'LB: When considering SACs, minor adverse does not work for the assessment, it should be 'does or does not have adverse effect' in relation to integrity of SAC. There is a separate assessment for this, make sure consistent terminology and clearly signposted to relevant chapters throughout to avoid wrong messaging* *PP: Mentioned that there is a SAC assessment, and noted LB comments regarding terminology when referring to the SAC, and that EIA terminology shouldn't be used.'* *The full minutes from this meeting are provided in Appendix A of this document for further reference.* *As noted in the above text, Natural England confirmed there was a separate assessment for consideration of effects on the Dogger Bank SAC. As a result of this feedback, the Applicants removed reference to the Dogger Bank SAC itself as a receptor, instead including reference to the Dogger Bank as a geological receptor.* *It should be noted that the Dogger Bank SAC is designated for the Annex I habitat feature 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time' and not any geological features.* As such referring to the Dogger Bank as a geological and geomorphological receptor, which is not covered by the SAC designation, ensured a more appropriate assessment. It would be erroneous to assess the receptor in the marine physical environment chapter in terms of its SAC designation which is related to habitats and instead this is considered in the ***RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)*** *[REP4-014].*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position stated above at Deadline 5. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position stated above at Deadline 5 and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
B22	We do not agree with the conclusions of the EIA or cumulative effects assessments for the Flamborough Front during Operation and Maintenance. We advise the Applicants should seek to reduce impacts as much as possible through consideration of the placement of foundation structures and reducing the WCS for foundation structures within Array Areas. Owing to the ecological importance of the Flamborough Front, and emerging evidence that suggests large OWF clusters (i.e. Dogger Bank) may result in substantial impacts on stratification, currents, and sediment resuspension; we also advise that the Applicants should commit to monitoring potential changes to stratification, currents, and productivity (pre-construction, post-construction, lifetime). The results of monitoring should be combined with those from other nearby OWFs and with up-to-date research such as from the University of Hull. (7.8, 8.7.3.4).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 on the In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) [APP-247], in order to take into account all of the updates from Change Request 1, the Defra Marine Noise Policy paper and updated ornithology assessments. Deadline 2 No change. Deadline 3 No change. See Appendix J and our response to ExQ MCP.1.1.0 in Appendix K of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated that a technical note summarising the potential effects of the Projects on the Flamborough Front and how other offshore wind farm projects have assessed their potential impacts on the feature will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-027]. We maintain the advice provided at Deadline 3 with respect to monitoring requirements. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. There is no change to the significance of effect (in EIA terms) in the re-assessment of impacts to Flamborough Front as provided in [REP4-092] 14.7 Review of Flamborough Front. Whilst we welcome the proposed monitoring, we continue to advise that a precautionary approach be adopted for the impact assessment. See Appendix	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B33): '*The cumulative significance of effect is assessed as negligible because any effects caused by the Projects structures would only interact with other offshore wind farms at a regional scale. The Projects-alone significance at a regional scale is negligible. There would be no interaction at a local scale. Hence, the overall cumulative negligible effect.* *Monitoring of the Flamborough Front can only be undertaken using remote sensing techniques. This is because, when the Flamborough Front is present, it is a 320 km-long zone separating the well-mixed cooler waters to the south from the warmer stratified waters to the north. The discontinuity in temperature is typically visible in satellite infrared imagery and this is the best method to investigate its location and structure. Trying to monitor the feature using deployment of Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers or other instruments located on the seabed or in the water column would only provide local-scale information which could not be reliably associated with any effects induced by the Projects structures*'. Deadline 4 The Applicants have submitted a **Review of Flamborough Front** [RE4-092] technical note at Deadline 4, which outlines the current research and evidence base to support the assessment of impacts on the Flamborough Front. Given the ephemeral and dynamic nature of the Flamborough Front it is unclear how Natural England perceive there to be an opportunity to reduce impacts through the positioning of structures as a layout which may bring benefits on one day, or in one week, or month or year, may not deliver benefits in the next period. The Worst Case Scenario has been substantially reduced by the Applicants since Project inception in terms of both the numbers and sizes of structures. Key examples of this are through the reduction of Offshore Platform numbers from 8 to 3 following the acceptance of Project Change Request 1 into examination and through the removal of gravity- based foundations from the design envelope. Deadline 5 As per the response given in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: B22): '*As noted in the **Review of Flamborough Front** [REP4-092] and **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 3)** [REP4-052] submitted at Deadline 4, the Applicants have committed to the monitoring of the Flamborough Front.'*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicant has outlined in [REP6-052] that they will consider The Crown Estate FRONTWARD project during the pre-construction stage of the in-principal monitoring to establish the duration and frequency of occurrence of the Flamborough Front within the Array Areas, to inform the design of post-construction monitoring. The Applicant maintains their position on their assessment of significance of effect (in EIA terms) of impacts to the Flamborough Front. Natural England maintain our previous advice on this.	Deadline 6 The Applicants will provide an updated assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport over the operation lifetime of the Projects in the updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. End of Examination Position While the Applicants have committed to the monitoring of the Flamborough Front, as detailed in the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)** [REP7-115], the Applicant maintains their position that there will be no significant effect (in EIA terms) to the Flamborough Front as a result of the Projects and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
B23	We cannot rule out an adverse effect on integrity for the Humber Estuary SAC due to the current condition allowing 10% of the cumulative export cable length to be protected from 350m seaward of MLWS to the 10m depth contour. We advise that alternative methods of cable burial and/or protection should be explored in line with the mitigation hierarchy, to remove or reduce the need for cable protection between MLWS and the 10m contour. If cable protection is not removed from the project envelope, the commitment and associated DCO condition should be refined to only placing cable protection within -9 and -10m below LAT, as the Applicants have already identified this as being the area potentially requiring cable protection. See also C13. (6.1, 7.5, 7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix B2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. Please see B49 with respect to further action needed in response to the Applicants updated Cable Statement [REP2-040] which could progress this issue. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. We welcome the Applicant's clarification [REP3-028] that the approximate length of cable protection measures within the nearshore would be 116m per cable trench (assuming the cables were laid in a straight line) and will only protrude 50cm above the seabed. However, we require clarity	The Applicants also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B35): *'See the Applicants' Responses to RR-039: B2 regarding cable protection measures in the nearshore.* *The Applicants have not yet developed detailed designs relating to the length of cable protection required (or its location and the location of the trenchless transition exit pit) for the export cable. Work is currently ongoing to provide an update on these topics and will continue post-consent. Any updates, should they be made within the timeframe of the examination, will be shared with all Interested Parties and the ExA'.* Deadline 3 As stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'The Applicants note that the height of cable protection is secured in the Deemed Marine Licences (DMLs) and direct Natural England to the response as stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representation** [AS-048] (RR-039:B35) …'Regarding the potential height of cable protection measures within the 10m depth contour, as noted in paragraph 189 of **Chapter 14 Shipping and Navigation** [APP-121] the Applicants would follow the guidance contained in MGN 654 in relation to cable protection, namely that cable protection would not change the charted water depth by more than 5%, unless otherwise agreed with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Trinity House. This commitment is secured within the following conditions of the DMLs:* • DML 1 & 2 – Condition 15;	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		on whether this is secured in a plan/document. The Applicants also propose further modelling to demonstrate that the WCS nearshore cable protection will have a limited effect on the area and that a technical note will be provided at Deadline 5 regarding the potential effects of cable protection measures on sediment transport in the nearshore environment. See Appendix B4 of Natural England's Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5: No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP4-088] that a technical note will be provided at Deadline 5 regarding the potential effects of cable protection measures on sediment transport in the nearshore environment. We will provide further comments accordingly. Deadline 6 No change. The Applicant has carried out a more detailed assessment [REP5-040] of the potential impacts of nearshore cable protection on nearshore sediment transport processes and coastal morphology, however, there remains uncertainty regarding potential impacts to adjacent coastline. We remain unable to rule out an AEoI on the Humber Estuary SAC. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change. We maintain our previous advice. However, with regards to cable protection height, we note that within The ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft DCO [PD-028], the ExA has recommended that if cable protection would be required at greater heights than 5% of navigable depth, that this should also be agreed with the MMO in consultation with the SNCB. Natural England welcome this.	• DML 3 & 4 – Condition 13; and • DML 5 – Condition 11. *As such, within the 10m depth contour the Applicants would be limited to a cable protection height of no greater than 50cm. Therefore, rock placement would not be used within the 10m depth contour, with other design solutions (such as concrete mattresses) being required should a need for cable protection measures be identified in the final design of the Projects.'* *The Applicants have assessed changes to bedload sediment transport due to cable protection measures as having a negligible significance of effect (see Section 8.7.4.5. of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-084]). The evidence base to support this assessment is presented in paragraph 298 which is restated below:* *'In a study at Easington along south Holderness, HR Wallingford (2011) showed that most of the longshore transport from wave breaking occurs close to the shoreline, within approximately 250m of the cliff line. Seaward of this, the wavedriven sediment transport is effectively zero. Given the similar shore profile gradients at the landfall and Easington (East Riding of Yorkshire Council, 2014) the conclusion can be drawn that the active zone at the landfall is similar in width to that at Easington. Hence, sediment transport driven by waves seaward of 250m from the cliffs at the landfall is very low (although still within the closure depth) and there will be no effect on these processes by the presence of the cable protection structures.'* *The Applicants have committed to limiting the length of cable protection measures in the nearshore to 10% of the distance from 350m of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) to the 10m water depth contour. The maximum distance between these two points within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor is 1164m. Therefore, the approximate length of cable protection measures would be 116m per cable trench (assuming the cables were laid in a straight line). At these lengths they would not create a complete blockage effect to longshore sediment transport. This indicative length of cable protection is shown Figure C-1 in **Appendix C** of this document. They will also only protrude 50cm above the* *seabed, so would not create a complete blockage effect in the water column and sediment would bypass the structures both over and around them. Therefore, there would be no effect in terms of sediment supply to the Humber Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Spurn Point which are located 40km away from the landfall, especially considering the extremely high volumes of sediment delivered to the Holderness coast through cliff erosion, given it is the fastest eroding coast in the UK.* *To further demonstrate the limited effects that cable protection in the nearshore environment would have, the Applicants are undertaking modelling of an indicative case of this feature and the effect it would have on the wave regime in the area – given that wave generated currents are the principal driver of sediment movement in the vicinity of the Projects' landfall location. A technical note detailing this modelling will be provided at Deadline 5.'* Deadline 4 As noted above, a technical note detailing this modelling will be provided at Deadline 5.	

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			Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-122: B5): *'The 116m length detailed in **The Applicant's Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] was stated to provide an illustrative estimate of the potential scale of cable protection measures required within the nearshore area. As such this figure has not been secured as an absolute length within the **Draft DCO (Revision 8)** [document reference 3.1], with this commitment remaining secured under the following wording in Condition 3 (4) of Deemed Marine Licences (DMLs) 3 and 4 of the **Draft DCO (Revision 8)** [document reference 3.1]:* *Any offshore export cables within the area between 350 metres seaward of MLWS and the 10 metre depth contour as measured against LAT (as at the date of commencement of construction of the licensed activities) must not have cable protection exceeding 10% of the length of such cables, when combined with the offshore export cables authorised by the deemed marine licence granted under Schedule 12 / 13 of the Order.* *The Applicants have submitted the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [document reference 15.8] at Deadline 5 which demonstrates the limited effects that cable protection in the nearshore environment would have. The modelling is focused on wave generated currents given they are the principal driver of sediment movement in the vicinity of the Projects' landfall location.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B23): *'The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses on this matter in Table 2-15 and Table 2-17 of this document.* *At no point during examination have Natural England presented any evidence to support their concerns. Having recently undertaken modelling in relation to this matter, based on a highly precautionary scenario, the Applicants disagree that there remains uncertainty in the assessment, and are of the firm opinion that Natural England have been provided sufficient evidence to rule out AEoI on the Humber Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC).'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as detailed in **The Applicants' Comments on the ExA's Proposed Schedule of Changes to the dDCO** [REP7-130]: *The Applicants are of the opinion that this amendment is unnecessary and do not propose to make this change, noting that control of the reduction of water depths to levels exceeding 5 percent of navigable depths is already secured via the Applicants' commitment to comply with MGN654, contained in the 'Offshore Safety Management' conditions included within each Deemed Marine Licence presented in the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [REP6-004] (e.g. Condition 18 of Schedule 10 DML).*	

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			Further, the Applicants note that Natural England's interest in this issue only applies within the 10m depth contour and not beyond. As such, if applied, this recommendation would only be applicable to Schedule 11 DML2 and Schedule 12 DML3 and should be restricted to water depths within the 10m depth contour closest to shore only. *Requesting this requirement beyond the 10m depth contour will likely further increase Natural England's known and stated resourcing problems for no discernible benefit, which may also then lead to further delays in necessary approvals.* *Finally, it is not necessary for the MMO to consult itself on the discharge of DML conditions.* The Applicants also note that the Environment Agency (EA) have confirmed in SoCG that they were '*satisfied with the information provided and with the mitigation proposed by the Applicants, and that the position of this item as agreed*'. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B24	We advise that the Applicants should commit to the removal of all structures on and above the seabed and consider the potential decommissioning of any proposed external cable/scour protection (including evidence on the likelihood of its success and impacts). We advise that the Applicants should consider and assess the long-term impacts to the marine physical environment of any assets left in situ for the lifetime of the assets within a pre-construction outline Decommissioning plan. (7.8)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 3. Deadline 2 No Change - See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See also Point B7 above. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See also Point B7 above. Deadline 6	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B37): '*The wind turbines would be reused or recycled during decommissioning. Hence, the only above-surface infrastructure that may be left post-decommissioning is either scour and cable protection siting slightly proud of the seabed or buried beneath the seabed. Any potential longterm significance of effects due to this remaining infrastructure would be the same as those assessed for the operational phase of the wind farm for those parameters. In all cases the significance during operation is negligible*'. Deadline 3 The Applicants have previously stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: NE7) that: '*The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The Applicants understand the sensitivities of the benthic habitats of the Offshore Development Area. In recognition of these sensitivities the Applicants have committed to embedded mitigation to minimise use of scour and external cable protection where practicable. Cable and scour protection methods and designs will be developed post-consent**. The Applicants will give due consideration to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects post-consent**.*' Engineering assessment and design work relating to cable and scour protection is on-going. This work will not be finalised until the pre-construction phases of the Projects. As stated above consideration, will be given to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects. The Final Cable Statement(s) and final Scour Protection	

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		No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See also Point B7 above. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicants have committed [REP6-044] to consider removability of cable protection as part of the development of the final Cable Statement and Decommissioning Programme to be produced for submission to the SoS pre construction. Whilst this is welcome, it is not sufficient to resolve concerns regarding the lack of a full commitment to decommissioning.	Plan(s) presented for the approval of MMO prior to the commencement of construction (where required under each DML) will provide the final details of cable and scour protection proposed. Deadline 5 The Applicants direct Natural England to the Deadline 5 response provided to Point B7 above. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as outlined at Deadline 5 and in Point A15 in **Table 3-2**.	
B25	We advise that the value of both Dogger Bank and Smithic Bank is high. This should be taken into consideration by the Applicants and their assessment updated where necessary. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. We welcome the Applicants acknowledgement [AS-048] that the value of both Dogger Bank and Smithc Bank are higher than low. However, our advice remains unchanged. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position No change. The Applicant has indicated in [REP4-088] and in their Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at ISH5 [REP4-086] that as Dogger Bank is not a sand bank in terms of morphology (rather a complex set of glacial landforms covered with a veneer of sand), therefore they did not assign it a high value. Natural England directs the ExA and competent authority for the HRA to the conservation objectives for Dogger Bank SAC which sets out the high value of this Annex I	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B38): '*With regards to the marine physical environment, the Applicants acknowledge that following the definition of value in Table 8-10 of* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080], Dogger Bank and Smithic Bank are now assigned medium as the receptors are not designated, but of local / regional importance. The original values assigned as low in* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] are therefore changed to medium. To assign high values in terms of the marine physical environment, the feature would need to be designated. This change in value would not alter the original assessment conclusions reached in* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080], with regards to Smithic Bank and Dogger Bank'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided above. As stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'The Applicants acknowledge the value of the Dogger Bank SAC is high in relation to its ecological function as outlined in* ***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology*** *[APP-085]. However, the Dogger Bank SAC is not designated for its geological or geomorphological function and therefore cannot be assigned a value of high in relation to the assessment of marine physical processes. To ensure the assessment is robust and consistent, value must be considered following the criteria defined in Table 8-10 of* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080].* *Therefore, Smithic Bank also cannot be assigned a high value unless it is designated.'* Deadline 5 The Applicants have assigned Dogger Bank as having high value and will update the significance of effect accordingly within the updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7.	

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		sandbank. The SNCBs fundamentally disagree with the Applicant on this. Having thoroughly considered this, we do not believe that resolution will occur during examination. Therefore unless there is a change in the Applicant's position, our position will remain unchanged for the remainder of the examination In addition, we advise that Smithic Bank is a Feature of Conservation Importance with a high value due to providing shelter to the northern part of the Holderness Coast including the town of Bridlington and also has wider ecological importance.	Natural England state Smithic Bank is a feature of conservation importance but as it is not designated, it is not clear what features of the sand bank are considered to have conservation importance and how they relate to marine physical processes. Following the definitions of value provided in Table 8-9 of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080], Smithic Bank is assigned a low value as it "is not designated but is of local importance for marine geology, oceanography or physical processes (including water quality)". For the receptor to be assigned medium value, it would need to be of regional importance, but it is a local feature, confined to the lee of Flamborough Head. Deadline 6 The Applicants have assigned Dogger Bank as having high value and will update the significance of effect accordingly within the updated version of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. The Applicants maintain that in this case the value of Annex 1 habitat is intrinsically considered as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process. As far as the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is concerned boundaries of designated sites are not relevant. If in the EIA, receptors are accorded higher sensitivity based on value and not ecological sensitivity, this strays into the HRA. Where value could be used, for example, would be if there was a Habitat or Species of Principal Importance outwith a designated site which would not be otherwise captured within the HRA or Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (MCZA) process, which is not relevant in this instance. Natural England state Smithic Bank is a feature of conservation importance but as it is not designated, it is not clear what features of the sand bank are considered to have conservation importance and how they relate to marine physical processes. Following the definitions of value provided in Table 8-9 of Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080], Smithic Bank is assigned a low value as it "is not designated but is of local importance for marine geology, oceanography or physical processes (including water quality)". For the receptor to be assigned medium value, it would need to be of regional importance, but it is a local feature, confined to the lee of Flamborough Head. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] at Deadline 7, the Applicants consider this matter to be closed. The Applicants maintain that in this case the value of Annex 1 habitat is intrinsically considered as part of the HRA process. As far as the EIA is concerned boundaries of designated sites are not relevant. If in the EIA, receptors are accorded higher sensitivity based on value and not ecological sensitivity, this strays into the HRA. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

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B26	Supporting evidence for seabed recovery from installation vessels has been provided based on pre-installation (2010) and post-removal surveys (2022) for two Met Masts in DBB and C OWFs (i.e. after a period of 12 years). There is insufficient information behind the conclusion that the duration, reversibility and, thus, magnitude of impact on seabed morphology will be low. Consequently, we are unable to agree with the assessment conclusion that effect significance will be negligible. The Applicant should provide further evidence for seabed recovery following installation vessel impacts. Additional mitigation should be explored to minimise impacts to the seabed morphology at Dogger Bank and the SAC during construction and Operation and Maintenance activities. (8.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicant's response and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. As stated by the Applicants [AS-048], persistent installation vessel impacts may occur on Dogger Bank where no (or little) mobile sediment overlies static geological formations. We therefore advise that the assessment of recoverability, value and sensitivity for Dogger Bank should be updated to reflect this. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. We note the reduction in seabed impacts due to jack up vessel indentations over the lifetime of the project due to the reduction in the number of offshore platforms as outline in [AS-141], however, the issue of seabed recovery evidence remains. Deadline 4 & 5 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. Whilst the Applicant maintains their position [REP6-052] and disagreement remains on the assessment, a footprint for habitat loss from jack-up use has been provided [REP5-037] and will be included in the next iteration of the RIAA. We acknowledge that if SoS concludes that habitat disturbance contributes to AEoI, then the jacking-up footprint would be within the disturbance footprint and therefore already taken into account.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B39): *'Each wind turbine installation could potentially generate about 6,600m2 of indentations. Where these indentations are created in areas of mobile sediment, they are likely to be infilled through natural sediment transport processes. This is the most likely scenario given the shallow geology of the array areas, where sediment (sand) deposited in the modern marine environment has been proven in boreholes to reach thicknesses of up to 9.5m. However, there is a possibility that some of the indentations would be formed in areas of seabed that contain no (or little) mobile sediment, where static geological formations (e.g. the underlying Dogger Bank Formation) are exposed at the seabed or are close to seabed under a veneer of sediment. In these cases, the indentations are likely to remain unchanged over the longer-term, which would change the seabed topography in relatively small, isolated areas across the Array Areas. However, the substrate that will be exposed within the indentations will have the same geological composition as the surrounding seabed. So, in terms of qualifying habitat (seabed / substrate type), they would remain unchanged.* *As such, section 8.7.3.10 of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] determined that there would be no likely significant effects (in EIA terms) in relation to Indentations on the Seabed Due to Installation Vessels'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided above. As stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'There are no monitoring data from the Dogger Bank for jack-up operations. However, monitoring from Moray East (Moray Offshore Wind Farm (East) Limited, 202427) considered depressions from construction vessels, in this case the deepest penetrating jack up (11.2m) had infilled at a rate of almost 4m per year. Considering the hydrodynamic and geological conditions are comparable between Moray East and Dogger Bank, this supports the interpretation that the impact on seabed morphology from indentations caused by jack up platforms will be low as they will likely recover in the short terms (<5years). Please see the Applicants response to the first item in **Table 2-7** of **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] for further information on this topic.'* Deadline 6 While the Applicants maintain their position as detailed in the Deadline 3 response above, jack-up footprints with regards to potential habitat loss will be included on a without prejudice basis in the next revision of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-015]. The Applicants note that if the Secretary of State (SoS) concludes that habitat disturbance contributes to Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEoI) then the jacking-up footprint would be within the disturbance footprint and therefore already taken into account. Therefore, the footprint of jacking up should only be added to the permanent habitat loss footprint a) if SoS agrees that this is not a temporary disturbance impact and b) if the SoS agrees with the Applicants that other construction disturbance is temporary and does not contribute to AEoI.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B26): *'While the Applicants maintain their position as detailed in the Deadline 3 response above, jack-up footprints with regards to potential habitat loss have been included on a without prejudice basis in the next revision of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-015]. The Applicants note that if the Secretary of State (SoS) concludes that habitat disturbance contributes to AEoI then the jacking-up footprint would be within the disturbance footprint and therefore already taken into account. Therefore, the footprint of jacking up should only be added to the permanent habitat loss footprint a) if SoS agrees that this is not a temporary disturbance impact and b) if the SoS agrees with the Applicants that other construction disturbance is temporary and does not contribute to AEoI.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as outlined at Deadline 6 and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B27	The sensitivity of Dogger Bank (and Dogger Bank SAC) to changes in seabed level from certain construction activities has been assessed as negligible. We advise that these construction activities and similar O&M activities are likely to result in changes to the extent and distribution and physical structure of the site's sandbank feature, which will further hinder its restore objective(s). Further mitigation measures should be adopted and secured to minimise impacts. Pre and post-construction monitoring should be committed to validate predictions of seabed elevation change and extent of deposition, sediment composition and distribution change, and seabed recovery across the Array Areas and Inter-Platform Corridor within Dogger Bank SAC. Should impacts be found to be greater than predicted then the necessary recourse should be taken. (8.7.3.6).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicant's response and additional submission '10.44 Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage' [AS-025] and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No Change - See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Applicants have committed to carrying out pre-construction full seabed coverage bathymetry surveys within the Order Limits in the IPMP [REP2-044]. However, further assessment and monitoring commitments are required. Natural England refers you to Deadline 3 Appendix B3 and J.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B40): *'The anticipated maximum depth of seabed preparation will be 0.5m, which is within the natural range of elevation change that is currently being experienced across Dogger Bank. Also, route selection and micro-siting will be used to avoid areas of seabed that pose a significant challenge to installation. This will minimise the requirement for seabed preparation and the associated seabed disturbance.* *Where seabed preparation is required, the seabed will be disturbed (up to 0.5m in depth). The coarser sediment (sand) that is disturbed would fall rapidly and the resulting change would be a low protrusion above the existing seabed that is local to the release point. The deposited sediment would be like the sediment on the seabed that it has replaced and the surrounding seabed. Over time, tidal currents would remobilise and transport this sediment as bedload, and the distribution and physical structure of the area would return to baseline conditions.* *Any fine sediment released into the water column could potentially settle. The overall change in elevation of the seabed due to deposition of sediment from the plume for foundations was modelled (see **Appendix 8-3 Marine Physical Processes Modelling Technical Report** [APP-084]. The results show the maximum change in seabed level was less than 5mm. This sediment would be continually resuspended on each tide and eventually widely dispersed, to reduce the thickness to a point where it will be effectively zero.*	

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		Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No Change. The Applicant has indicated in [REP4-088] and in their Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at ISH5 [REP4-086] that as Dogger Bank is not a sand bank in terms of morphology (rather a complex set of glacial landforms covered with a veneer of sand), therefore they did not assign it a high value. Natural England directs the ExA and competent authority for the HRA to the conservation objectives for Dogger Bank SAC which sets out the high value of this Annex I sandbank. The SNCBs fundamentally disagree with the Applicant on this. Having thoroughly considered this, we do not believe that resolution will occur during examination. Therefore unless there is a change in the Applicant's position, our position will remain unchanged for the remainder of the examination In addition, we advise that Smithic Bank is a Feature of Conservation Important with a high value due to providing shelter to the northern part of the Holderness Coast including the town of Bridlington and also has wider ecological importance. With regards to further assessment and monitoring requirements for sandwave monitoring, please refer to our detailed IPMP comments submitted at Deadline 3 with overarching concerns [REP3-056] as well as Appendix B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. Please see our advice in Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*As such, the Applicants do not believe that any migration further to that detailed in section 8.3.3 of* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] is required with regards to construction related changes to marine physical processes across Dogger Bank (and Dogger Bank SAC)'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided above. As stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'In addition, as noted in REP2-069 C28a commitment Co91 of the* ***Commitments Register (Revision 2)*** *[REP2-025] (and secured in the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 6)*** *[document reference: 3.1]) commits the Projects to micro-site around surficial deposits of glacial till, should they be identified during pre-construction surveys.* *The Applicants have committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment within the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC, thus ensuring, as Natural England have requested, that sediment both remains within the system and sandbank recovery is enabled. In addition, the Applicants have committed to undertaking post-construction monitoring activities to determine the recovery of sandwaves / sandbank habitat, as detailed in Table 1-2 of the* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)*** *[REP2-043].'* Deadline 6 The Applicants have committed to mitigation in the form of pre- and post construction monitoring of changes in seabed level and sediment transport regime, including scour processes. These are outlined in the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 4)** [REP5-027] and secured in Condition 15 of DMLs 1 and 2; Condition 13 of DMLs 3 and 4, and Condition 11 of DML5 of the **Draft DCO (Revision 9)** [REP6-003]. With reference to the definition of value for Dogger Bank and Smithic Bank, see response to Point B25 above. Deadline 7 See responses to REP6-072: B1 v) and REP6-072: B1 vi) in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B27): REP6-072: B1 v) *'The Applicants have simulated sediment transport regimes at the landfall and quantified changes to the sediment budget due to the presence of the worst-case scenario with the resulting showing changes to sediment transport budgets at the landfall would be <1%. These changes would become less pronounced with distance from the cable protection measures, and with the Humber Estuary Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Spurn Head as the designated geomorphological feature of the Holderness Inshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) being located 53km away from the cable protection measures, it would not be possible to detect or measure a change of this magnitude, or isolate the Projects as the source of the change considering the high degree of natural variability in the coastal system, high sediment supply rates due to coastal erosion and the potential effects of other*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			projects and schemes located much closer to the receptors. As it is not possible to detect the change, the only evidence base to support the conclusions of the Environmental Statement (ES), and to test Natural England's assumption that there will be adverse risks to the Humber Estuary SAC and Holderness Inshore MCZ, is the numerical modelling provided in the ***Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall*** *[REP5-040]. The Applicants cannot provide the additional evidence Natural England seek, therefore will have to agree to disagree on this matter, noting if an effect cannot be detected, it is unlikely it will be significant in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) terms.'* REP6-072: B1 vi) '*See response to REP6-072: B1 v) above.* *Spurn Head is highly unlikely to be breached due to a reduction in sediment supply of <1% of annual sediment budgets at the Dogger Bank South located 53km away.* *The Applicants have continually communicated the risks associated with not being able to bury the cable in water depths of less than 10m which would require mitigation in the form of cable protection measures. They have also undertaken additional numerical modelling, beyond the levels that have ever been required for other schemes making landfall along the Holderness coast, to provide the evidence base to support the conclusions of the ES. Natural England have not, at any point in this examination or before, provided any evidence of any kind to support their assumptions and requirements and therefore cannot "beyond scientific doubt" justify their advice. Therefore, the Applicants agree to disagree on this matter.'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants maintain the position as outlined at Deadline 7.	
B28	There is insufficient information regarding the location and significance of cable crossings and nearshore cable protection measures relative to Smithic Bank to support the assessment conclusions. The potential exchange of sediment between South Smithic and the Holderness Coast should be considered when assessing impacts to the nearshore and circulatory sediment transport processes due to the presence of nearby cable protection measures and cable crossings. (7.8).	<u>Deadline 1</u> No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. <u>Deadline 2</u> No change. We continue to advise that more detailed information is needed regarding the proposed cable crossing with the Hornsea Four export cable corridor, and its proximity, to Smithic Bank, in order to better understand potential impacts on nearshore sediment transport processes. <u>Deadline 3</u>	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B42): '*The sediment transport processes controlling the development and evolution of Smithic Bank are landscape-scale, both spatially and temporally. Bathymetry evidence suggests that since 1979 there have been large-scale changes to the morphology of the bank over wide areas, including areas that will be occupied by the proposed Offshore Export Cable Corridor. These changes constitute a significant movement of large volumes of sand, which will continue. The volume of sand transport that will be interrupted by any cable protection near Smithic Bank will be extremely small (orders of magnitude less) in comparison to the much larger volume being transported due to natural physical and sedimentary processes. Hence, the continued high-volume movement of sand within and around Smithic Bank will not be significantly affected by the relatively small volumes of sand that may be intercepted by the cable protection. See* ***Figure 8-2 - Location and Indicative sediment transport pathways across Smithic Bank derived from bedform geometry*** *(in* ***Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment Figure 8-1 to Figure 8-13*** *[APP-081]) which presents the Offshore Export Cable Corridor in relation to the Smithic Bank (as delimited by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)).*	

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		No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has provided an indicative location map for the DBS/Hornsea Project 4 cable crossing in Appendix D to [REP3-028]. We advise that in order to reduce potential impacts to nearshore sediment transport processes and seabed morphology, that the DBS/Hornsea Project 4 cable crossing should be placed seaward of the 20m depth contour to the east of Smithic Bank and as distant from Holderness Offshore MCZ, as possible. Cable crossing MDS parameters should also be reduced as much as possible. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change. The Applicant has clarified [REP5-037] that the approximate 116m length of nearshore cable protection measures per cable trench is an illustrative estimate rather than an absolute length to be secured within the draft DCO. Furthermore, as discussed in Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission, the information currently available does not provide sufficient detail to inform understanding of the potential impact of nearshore cable crossings/protection to Smithic Bank. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicants have provided a map as part of the updated Cable Statement [REP6-044] showing preliminary and indicative cable protection locations within the ECC. However, they have also stated that it is not representative of the final proposals and the final cable protection locations will be informed by factors such as further site investigations, cable routing, updated CBRAs and burial depths achieved during installation. Therefore,	*There will also be no potential for effect on bedload sediment transport at cable protection at cable crossing points. This is because the locations of the crossings are outside and seaward of the boundary of Smithic Bank on a coarse seabed in deeper water and not subject to processes driving the bank evolution. The nearest crossing is with the Hornsea Project Four cable corridor to the east of the bank. The positions of the cable crossings are outside the sediment transport pathway controlling the form and function of Smithic Bank or any sediment exchange with the coast.'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided above. As stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'As the exact routing of the Hornsea Project Four offshore export cables will not be known until that project enters its detailed design phase, it is not yet known where exactly the Projects Offshore Export Cables would cross the Hornsea Project Four offshore export cable. As such, the Applicants are unable to provide any more detailed information regarding the Hornsea Project Four offshore export cable crossing at this time. To help indicate where any crossings may take place, the Applicants have provided Figure D-1 in **Appendix D** which details the location where the Hornsea* Project Four export *cable route and the Projects Offshore Export Cable Corridor overlap, and hence where any crossings may occur.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-122: B8): *'The Applicants note that it is not within their gift to heavily influence where this crossing might be located. The Applicants are likely only to be able to micro-site the crossing location within their 1km wide cable corridor after Hornsea Project Four has selected their cable routes. The final Hornsea Project 4 export cable routes will be the primary driving factor behind the location of the DBS / Hornsea Project 4 cable crossing relative to the location of the Smithic Bank and the Holderness Offshore MCZ given their corridor expands from around a standard width of a 2km wide swathe to a 9km wide swath where it meets the DBS export cable corridor, and they could cross the DBS corridor anywhere within this swathe. The flexibility in relation to the crossing location lies mainly with Hornsea Project 4 as a result. The eastern fringes of their export cable corridor run from c. 16m depth contour (closer to Smithic Bank), whilst the western fringes run to c. 42m depth contour (further from Smithic Bank). Hornsea Project 4 will be free to select the optimum route for their project within their consented corridor and the Applicants can do little to influence this. Cognisant of the fact that Hornsea Project Four's final route selection is the key driver of the DBS / Hornsea Project 4 crossing location, the Applicants note that Natural England should seek to influence Hornsea Project 4 final route selection as a priority if they have an interest in this crossing location, as DBS can only micro-site the crossings relative to the route selected by this third party project.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B28):	

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		it remains unclear whether cable protection may be required in proximity to Smithic Bank.	*'The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses on this matter in Table 2-15 and Table 2-17 of this document.* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as outlined at Deadline 4. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England	
B29	There is insufficient information to support the assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport and seabed morphology due to the presence of cable protection measures on Dogger Bank. We advise that, firstly, the Applicants should attempt cable burial across Dogger Bank to avoid placement of cable protection measures within Dogger Bank SAC. Secondly, a seabed mobility assessment should be carried out to inform the cable burial assessment and, thus, the requirement for cable protection measures. Lastly, if cable protection measures are found to be necessary, potential changes to seabed sediment transport processes and seabed morphology should be fully assessed for the WCS option for cable protection measures on Dogger Bank. (7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix B2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. In the updated Cable Statement [REP2-040] it is stated that Seabed Mobility studies are ongoing. These studies are needed to inform the cable burial assessment and, thus, the requirement for cable protection measures. Therefore, currently it is not clear where external cable protection measures may be needed or the potential extent of their impact on sediment transport processes and seabed morphology. See Appendix B3 of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No change. See Appendix B4 of Natural England's Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. The Applicant has provided a more detailed assessment [REP5-040] of bed shear stress and sediment transport pathways at and around the	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B42): *'The sediment transport processes controlling the development and evolution of Smithic Bank are landscape-scale, both spatially and temporally. Bathymetry evidence suggests that since 1979 there have been large-scale changes to the morphology of the bank over wide areas, including areas that will be occupied by the proposed Offshore Export Cable Corridor. These changes constitute a significant movement of large volumes of sand, which will continue. The volume of sand transport that will be interrupted by any cable protection near Smithic Bank will be extremely small (orders of magnitude less) in comparison to the much larger volume being transported due to natural physical and sedimentary processes. Hence, the continued high-volume movement of sand within and around Smithic Bank will not be significantly affected by the relatively small volumes of sand that may be intercepted by the cable protection. See Figure 8-2 - Location and Indicative sediment transport pathways across Smithic Bank derived from bedform geometry (in **Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment Figure 8-1 to Figure 8-13** [APP-081]) which presents the Offshore Export Cable Corridor in relation to the Smithic Bank (as delimited by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)).* *There will also be no potential for effect on bedload sediment transport at cable protection at cable crossing points. This is because the locations of the crossings are outside and seaward of the boundary of Smithic Bank on a coarse seabed in deeper water and not subject to processes driving the bank evolution. The nearest crossing is with the Hornsea Project Four cable corridor to the east of the bank. The positions of the cable crossings are outside the sediment transport pathway controlling the form and function of Smithic Bank or any sediment exchange with the coast'.* Deadline 3 As stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'See the Applicants' response to this matter in **Table 2-6**, REP2-064:3 above* (and noted below for ease): *'The Applicants would like to reiterate that the final version of the CBRA will not be completed within the time frame of examination. There will also be no updates to the existing CBRA within the time frame of examination. This is because there is no new information or data available to the Applicants that can provide any further understanding than has already been documented. The Applicants are in the process of planning additional surveys for summer 2025. When the results become available, they will feed into the CBRAs as they are further updated post consent. The final CBRAs will be appended to*	

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		Array Areas. However, as discussed in Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission, these results and those in the original ES chapters need to be evaluated in the context of the different seabed sediment composition and thickness and seabed morphology areas across Dogger Bank, over the lifetime of the cable protection. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP6-051] that a refined baseline understanding of sediment transport pathways will be incorporated in the revised version of Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. The Applicant has also stated that updated predictions of future wave climate within section 8.6.3 of the revised [APP-080] have considered these changes in the assessment of construction activities and infrastructure at the landfall, where waves are the dominant driver of sediment transport. We will provide comment accordingly.	*any final Cable Statements submitted by the Applicants in fulfilment of the relevant DML Conditions relating to this matter, such as condition (such as condition 15 (1) (g) in Schedule 10). Hence, Natural England will have sight of, and opportunity to comment on, these documents and any related engineering proposals as part of the DML condition discharge process.* *The current understanding of seabed mobility is outlined in section 8.5.8. of* ***Chapter 9 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080]. This baseline understanding is based on a Projects-specific seabed mobility study undertaken by the Applicants to inform the assessment (MarineSpace, 2023). The study assesses multiple bathymetric surveys to quantify bed level change and shows that levels of change are of the order of 0.2m over an 11 year period in the Array Area. This study has been provided for consideration during the examination period, see the* ***Bed Mobility & Thermal Environment*** *[document reference: 13.7] submitted at Deadline 3. As noted above, it is expected this document will be superseded as further site investigation and design work is completed prior to construction. The Applicants re-iterate that, as noted above, there are protections written into the Draft DCO that will ensure that Natural England have the opportunity to review the information requested once it is available as part of the process of discharging DML conditions.'* *The Applicants note that first principle of cable protection is for cables to be buried. The final CBRA for the Projects will be written to maximise cable burial wherever the seabed conditions allow. Installation of any additional cable protection measures represents a risk mitigation measure, with the Applicants committing to minimising the use of external cable protection measures in commitment C092 of the* ***Commitments Register (Revision 2)*** *[REP2-025], as secured in the* ***Cable Statement (Revision 3)*** *[REP2-039]* *The* ***Bed Mobility & Thermal Environment*** *[document reference: 13.7], previously used to inform* ***Chapter 8 – Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] and referenced in that chapter, has been submitted at Deadline 3 to provide further evidence of the work the Applicants have undertaken to characterise the baseline environment within the Offshore Development Area.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants re-iterate their response provided in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028] (REP2-064:3), and provided above. Deadline 7 See response REP6-072: B7 in Point B17 of this table. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	

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B30	It is suggested that the magnitude of decommissioning effects on the marine physical environment would be comparable to those during the construction phase. However, the baseline conditions at the end of design life may differ significantly from those at pre-construction and the value of receptors may change over the lifetime of the project. Consequently, the EIA cannot confidently determine decommissioning impacts at the end of the design life of the Projects. A number of alternatives to decommissioning are emerging, and whilst these alternatives may be beyond the scope of the present ES, we advise that the EIA is updated as such alternatives progress. The Applicants should provide a pre-consent outline decommissioning plan which considers the potential long-term impacts to the marine physical environment and processes of any assets left in situ. (7.5, 7.8).	Deadline 1 No change. The Applicants do not agree that an outline decommissioning plan at this stage is helpful. We continue to advise that a pre-consent outline decommissioning plan is produced. We highlight that under S105 of the Energy Act 2004 a decommissioning plan must be provided to the SoS prior to construction of which the outline decommissioning plan would form the basis. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. See Point B7 above. Deadline 5 No change. We continue to advise that a pre-consent outline decommissioning plan is produced. Deadline 6 & 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B44): '*The Applicants do not agree that drafting an outline decommissioning plan at this stage would be helpful. The reasons for this include, but are not limited to:* *Final designs for the Projects not being available. Without knowing what is to be built, it is not possible to develop clear plans for decommissioning;* *Decommissioning is unlikely to be undertaken for several decades. At the present time the technologies available to enact decommissioning cannot be understood; and* *Best-practices and the legislative regimes relating to decommissioning will be better understood closer to the timing of decommissioning*'. Deadline 2 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-067:B30): '*The Applicants note that Natural England have acknowledged that a decommissioning plan is required for SOS approval under S105 of the Energy Act 2004* ***prior to construction****. It is for this reason that the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 5)*** *[REP1-004] contains Requirement 7 which prescribed that the Projects:* *'must not be commenced until a written decommissioning programme in compliance with any notice served upon the undertaker by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 105(2)(a) (requirement to prepare decommissioning programmes) of the 2004 Act has been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval'.* *The Applicants maintain that the deferral of the production of this programme to the post-consent / pre-construction phases of the Projects is the most appropriate and meaningful time for its delivery. One of the key reasons is that detail designs for the Projects will not be developed until that point. Without knowledge of the specific detail of what is to be constructed, and how it is to be installed, little value can be conveyed about any details relating to decommissioning. Were any decommissioning plans to be produced at the present time they would not be able to extend further than the statements already made in the Environmental Statement. With this being the case, any plan produced during examination would be of limited value. Thus, the Applicants maintain the position that any decommissioning plans should be brought forward for the approval of the SOS prior to the commencement of construction and no sooner. This approach is line with other recently consented offshore wind farm projects, including the Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension projects and Hornsea Project Four.*' Deadline 3 See the Applicants' response to this matter in Table 2-7, REP2-065:7.1 and REP2-065:7.2 of **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028] and provided below:	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			REP2-065:7.1 - The Applicants have previously stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: NE7) and reiterated in Point B7 of this document at Deadline 3. REP2-065:7.2 - *The Applicants have a far reaching and clearly demonstrable commitment to minimising their environmental impacts. This commitment has been clearly demonstrated through the site selection and development work it has undertaken to avoid impacts where possible as reported within the ES. The likely significant effects of the Projects have been further reduced through the mitigation proposals brought forward by the Projects. These proposals are catalogued in the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] and in secured in relevant management plans.* *In addition, the Applicants further highlight their recent efforts to minimise their environmental impacts through the introduction of the recently accepted Change Request (**Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141]), which were in large part brought forward as part of their comment to minimising the environmental impacts of the Projects where possible, including those impacts associated with the deployment of cable and scour protection.* *The Applicants reiterate their response on this issue as stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: NE7). This response is re-stated below:* *'The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The Applicants understand the sensitivities of the benthic habitats of the Offshore Development Area. In recognition of these sensitivities the Applicants have committed to embedded mitigation to **minimise use of scour and external cable protection where practicable.** Cable and scour protection methods and designs will be developed post-consent. The Applicants will give **due consideration to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects post-consent.**'* *Final Cable Statements are required for approval prior to the commencement of construction as conditions within each DML. The final Cable Statements will present the details of any cable protection proposed, including those details relating to the type, quantity and location of cable protection proposed.* *Similarly, Scour Protection Plans are required for approval prior to the commencement of construction under each relevant DML. The Scour Protection Plans will present the details of scour protection proposed including types, proposed sources, locations and quantities of scour protection proposed.* *The proposals put forward in any Final Cable Statements and Scour Protection Plans will apply the mitigation proposals identified within the ES. **The Applicants' embedded mitigation proposals to minimise the use of cable and scour protection as far as is practicable will be demonstrated within these documents. These documents will also demonstrate how due consideration has been given to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures.*** *The Final Cable Statement(s) and final Scour Protection Plan(s) presented for the approval of MMO prior to the commencement of construction (where required under each DML) will provide the final details of cable and scour protection proposed. The Applicants note that Natural England will have the*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			opportunity to comment on the finalised proposals brough forward for approval and DML condition discharge at this juncture. *The Applicants note, that in addition to engaging in further efforts to minimise the impacts of the deployment of cable and scour protection, these impacts will be compensated for at a level which is likely to exceed the quantum of impact both in terms of geographical extent and duration. See response to REP2-065:7.1 for further details.* *As regards decommissioning, a plan will be provided for Secretary of State approval under S105 of the Energy Act 2004* ***prior to construction****. This commitment is secured in* ***Draft DCO (Revision 6)*** *[document reference 3.1] which contains Requirement 7 which states that the Projects:* *'must not be commenced until a written decommissioning programme in compliance with any notice served upon the undertaker by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 105(2)(a) (requirement to prepare decommissioning programmes) of the 2004 Act has been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval'.* *The Applicants consider it most appropriate to give detailed consideration to matters pertaining to decommissioning following the completion of design work, with further consideration given to the matter across the life of the Projects. The reasons for this include, but are not limited to:* • *Final designs for the Projects not being available. Without knowing what is to be built, it is not possible to develop clear plans for decommissioning;* • *Decommissioning is unlikely to be undertaken for several decades. At the present time the technologies available to enact decommissioning cannot be understood; and* • *Best-practices and the legislative regimes relating to decommissioning will be better understood closer to the timing of decommissioning.* *The Applicants maintain that the deferral of the production of this programme to the post-consent / pre-construction phases of the Projects is the most appropriate and meaningful time for its delivery. In terms of decommissioning, the Applicants reiterate that the Decommissioning Programme and the Final Cable Statement and Scour Protection Plan will also demonstrate how due consideration has been given to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures, in addition to details relating to the Applicants decommissioning proposals. Thus, it is clear that there are post-consent controls in place in relation to the matters of concern to Natural England and they will have the opportunity to comment on the plans of the project at the most appropriate time.* *Through the steps presented above the Applicants have clearly demonstrated how the mitigation hierarchy will be applied to the impacts of cable and scour protection in relation to habitat loss, showing how these impacts will be avoided, reduced and mitigated as far as is practicable, and how the strategic compensation to be provided for the DBS Projects is likely to deliver on a highly precautionary basis both in terms of extent and duration. In addition, post consent controls are in place which could ensure the further reduction of the environmental impacts of the proposed Projects where practicable. Finally, the Applicants acknowledge Natural England's decommissioning study, but note that the focus of the study is only the feasibility of the removal of protection. In terms of environmental*	

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			impact avoidance, reduction, mitigation and compensation it does not take a holistic view as it does not consider issues and impacts associated with design, cost, maintenance and construction that may be associated with their use. For further information see https://publications.deltares.nl/Deltares250.pdf. It is important to consider and reflect upon the fact that there are potential disbenefits associated with the use of removable protection in addition to any perceived benefits when developing designs for cable and scour protection. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain their position as outlined at Deadline 2 and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
B31	*"Penetration and/or disturbance of the substratum below the surface of the seabed, including abrasion"* has been screened out for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) for Offshore Annex I Habitats and Dogger Bank SAC but has been included in the assessment (Section 6.4.2.1.1). We agree this should be included in the assessment and advise the screening tables are updated. (6.1, 6.1.1).	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue progressed. We continue to advise that the RIAA is updated to accurately reflect the impacts screened in, however as this impact has been included in the assessment we will not pursue this further.	The Applicants acknowledge the comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B45): '*The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement with regards to the potential effects screened in for assessment. As the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046] is a point in time document that reflects the position of the Applicants at the time of submission, it will not be updated. Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the project envelope or stakeholder comments will be captured though submissions to the examination.*' The Applicants also add in their **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C29): '*This impact is not screened out. Section 6.4.2.1.1of the **RIAA (RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) states: Construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning activities will result in abrasion / disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed / penetration and / or disturbance of the substratum below the surface of the seabed.*' End of Examination Position The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter was now agreed.	
B32	For Annex 1 features of the Humber Estuary SAC, Section 6.6.1.1 of the RIAA only lists 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time' and 'Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide' as having been assessed, despite more features being listed as screened in for assessment. We advise that the full list of features identified at Screening should be assessed in the RIAA. (6.1.1, 6.1).	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. The Applicants have confirmed that the missing features should have been assessed in the RIAA. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B46). Deadline 4 An updated version of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-014] has been submitted at Deadline 4, which includes these features not included in the initial revision of the report. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

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		No change. Change Request 1 [AS-141] has concluded that a reduction in the MDS has not changed the Applicants conclusion of no potential AEoI on the Humber Estuary SAC, however we still require evidence that all features of the SAC have been fully covered in an updated RIAA. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated that an updated RIAA will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-027] (ExQ, HRA.1.8). Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicant has screened in all relevant features for the Humber Estuary SAC in the updated RIAA [REP4-015].		
B33	Dogger Bank D OWF has not been included in the in-combination assessment for impacts to the Humber Estuary SAC - we advise this is included. (6.1).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - We continue to advise Dogger Bank D OWF is included in the in-combination assessment for impacts to the Humber Estuary SAC. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. It is NE's understanding that Dogger Bank D S42 PEIR is to be consulted on from 6 June - 1 August 2025 and therefore within the timeframes of this Examination Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B48): *'The Scoping Report for Dogger Bank D11, publicly released following the submission of the Projects' **Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP-027] application in June 2024, does not state the potential location or indicative proportions of any cable protection measures to be used within that projects offshore export cable corridor. As such, there is insufficient information available at this time to include Dogger Bank D in the Projects cumulative assessment on the Humber Estuary SAC'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain the position regarding this matter as provided in the above response. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B33): *'The Applicants direct Natural England to **The Applicant's Consideration of the Dogger Bank D Preliminary Environmental Information Report** [document reference 17.6] submitted at Deadline 7 which considers the potential in-combination effects with Dogger Bank D in the context of the Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA).'* End of Examination Position The Applicants highlight that the DBD RIAA has been considered within **The Applicant's Consideration of the Dogger Bank D Preliminary Environmental Information Report** [REP7-133] with regards to potential impacts on the Humber Estuary SAC.	

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		No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change.	The Applicants highlight the following text Natural England have confirmed will be included in their Deadline 8 Risk and Issues Log: *The DBD PEIR is now in the public domain through a Section 42 consultation. Whilst we welcome provision by the Applicants at Deadline 7 of the document '**The Applicant's Consideration of the Dogger Bank D Preliminary Environmental Information Report**' [REP7-133], Natural England are currently in the process of reviewing the PEIR and therefore cannot provide further comment on the appropriateness of [REP7-133] at this time. We therefore maintain the advice provided at Deadline 7 [REP7-154], that when determining the DBS windfarms, the Secretary of State considers Dogger Bank D in their HRA.*	
MCZ Assessment – Documents (s) Used:				
B34	Our concerns raised for the overall EIA in relation to impacts from cable installation and operation are all also relevant within the MCZ assessment. The MCZ Stage 1 impact assessment should be updated based on the comments provided on the impact assessment. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - Please see our comments on the Benthic Technical note [AS-104] included within Deadline 2 Appendix C2.1. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4, 5 and 6 No Change. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP6-052] that an updated version of the Stage 1 MCZ Assessment [APP-240] will be submitted at Deadline 7 to incorporate the information provided in [REP3-025] and [REP5-040], and to reflect the latest design parameters of the Projects. We will provide comments accordingly.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B25 – RR-039: B44) regarding the impact assessment. Deadline 3 As stated in in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028]: *'See the Applicants' response regarding nearshore cable protection in REP2-064:2 to REP2-064:3 in Table 2-6 above, and the disposal of sediment in relation the offshore export cable corridor in REP2-065:3.1 to REP2-065:3.6 in Table 2-7 above.* *In line with these responses, the Applicants do not believe that any further updates are required to be made for the **Stage 1 MCZA** [APP-240] and that the conclusions of this report remain valid.'.* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037]: *'The Applicants highlight the additional information with regards to indirect effects on the underlying biotopes present within the Holderness Inshore MCZ is presented in **Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP3-025], which provided further evidence that the biotopes present in within the Holderness Inshore MCZ are not sensitive to the potential levels of sediment re-suspension and deposition that may result from the Projects.* *With regards to the potential impacts on the Spurn Head geological feature of the Holderness Inshore MCZ, the Applicants have submitted the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [document reference 15.6] at Deadline 5 which demonstrates the limited effects that cable protection in the nearshore environment would have, with the modelling indicating the scale of the effect would be extremely small with a <1% reduction of the annual net sediment transport budget. The modelling is focused on wave generated currents given they are the principal driver of sediment movement in the vicinity of the Projects' landfall location.*	

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			Given this negligible reduction in annual net sediment transport budget, there will be no significant interruption to the existing sediment transport processes to the MCZ and the Spurn Head geological feature. In light of this additional information submitted into Examination, the Applicants confirm that an updated version of the ***Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment*** *[APP-240] will be submitted at Deadline 7 to incorporate the information provided in* ***Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)*** *[REP3-025] and* ***Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall*** *[document reference 15.6], and to reflect the latest design parameters of the Projects.'* End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] at Deadline 7.The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B35	An EIA matrix has been used to determine magnitude rather than considering if there is an impact pathway to the MCZ features and utilising conservation objectives, conservation advice and advice on operations. This section of the MCZ assessment should be updated in line with Stage 1 MCZ Assessments undertaken for other OWF projects. Until this is updated, we are unable to agree with the conclusions of this assessment. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - Please see our comments on the Benthic Technical note [AS-104] included within Deadline 2 Appendix C2.1. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. We note the Applicant's position that the Project will not hinder the conservation objectives of the MCZs however, we advise that if significant indirect impacts from DBS cable installation on designated features of the MCZ can't be excluded during Examination then we would recommend that a without prejudice MEEB proposal and/or commitments to invest in strategic compensation are progressed as was submitted for DEP and SEP. Please	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B53): *'The methodology detailed in section 3.2.1 Assessment of Risk to Conservation Objectives within the* ***Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment*** *[APP-240] follows the industry standard approach to assessing the risk of hindering the conservation objectives of any affected MCZs. It should be noted that the approach to defining magnitude detailed in this section matches that detailed in the Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects example noted in this response.* *The Natural England Advice on Operations documents for the Holderness Offshore and Holderness Inshore MCZs were used to inform the assessment, with appropriate references included to these documents within the* ***Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment*** *[APP-240]'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided in the above response. In addition, as stated in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028]: *'Reviewing Natural England's* ***Benthic Ecology Technical Note*** *[AS-104], it is unclear how these comments relate to this matter regarding the MCZA methodology. Could Natural England please provide further context for how, in their view, the methodology in the* ***Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (MCZA)*** *[APP-240] does not follow the approach of other offshore wind farm projects, when (as stated in the Applicants' previous response on the matter), the* ***Stage 1 MCZA*** *[APP-240] follows the same methodology as that of the consented Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension projects MCZA.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-122: B7):	

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		see Appendix B4 of Natural England's Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5 No change. We note that further information in relation to impacts to nearshore processes is due for submission at Deadline 5 which may progress this issue. Deadline 6 No change. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail on our outstanding concerns regarding the placement of nearshore cable protection. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*'The Applicants note that discussions on indirect effects on Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) have to date centred on the Holderness **Inshore** MCZ. This is due to the site including the designated Spurn Head geological feature and the subsequent potential for indirect effects resulting from the placement of cable protection measures in the nearshore environment (as noted in the 'Key Concern / Update' column of this response), as opposed to the Holderness Offshore MCZ referred to in the 'Natural England's Advice to Resolve Issue' column of this response. As such, the Applicant's response below is focused on the Holderness Inshore MCZ.* *The Applicants highlight the additional information with regards to indirect effects on the underlying biotopes present within the Holderness Inshore MCZ is presented in **Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP3-025], which provided further evidence that the biotopes present in within the Holderness Inshore MCZ are not sensitive to the potential levels of sediment re-suspension and deposition that may result from the Projects.* *With regards to the potential impacts on the Spurn Head geological feature of the Holderness Inshore MCZ, the Applicants have submitted the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [document reference 15.8] at Deadline 5 which demonstrates the limited effects that cable protection in the nearshore environment would have, with the modelling indicating the scale of the effect would be extremely small with a <1% reduction of the annual net sediment transport budget. The modelling is focused on wave generated currents given they are the principal driver of sediment movement in the vicinity of the Projects' landfall location. Given this negligible reduction in annual net sediment transport budge, there will be no significant interruption to the existing sediment transport processes to the MCZ and the Spurn Head geological feature* *In light of this additional information submitted into Examination, the Applicants confirm that an updated version of the **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment** [APP-240] will be submitted at Deadline 7 to incorporate the information provided in **Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP3-025] and **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [document reference 15.8], and to reflect the latest design parameters of the Projects.* *With regards to the reference to the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extension Projects (SEP/DEP) offshore wind farm projects, a without prejudice MEEB proposal was proposed from the outset of that Project for the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ, due to that projects export cable route routing directly through the site and there being a clear potential for direct impacts on the site. This is in contrast to Dogger Bank South, for which the Offshore Export Cable Corridor does not route directly through the Holderness Inshore MCZ, a change in route that was made during the pre-application phase at the request of Natural England (see **Chapter 4 - Site Selection and Assessment of Alternatives (Revision 2)** [AS-017] for further information), with any potential effects being limited to indirect effects only. As such, the Applicants do not agree that a comparison to the SEP/DEP MEEB proposal is appropriate in this instance given the greatly reduced potential scale of impact between the two projects.* *The Applicants also highlight that MEEB proposals regarding the Holderness Inshore MCZ were not required to be provided by Hornsea Project Four or the Dogger Bank A and B offshore wind farms, despite the offshore export cable corridors for these projects being located in the vicinity of the Projects*	

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			Offshore Export Cable Corridor and being subject to the identical DCO Conditions regarding nearshore cable protection (in the case of Dogger Bank A and B) or less stringent DCO Conditions (in the case of Hornsea Project Four). *Taking into consideration the volume of additional evidence provide by the Applicants through the Examination process, The Applicants maintain that there is no potential for significant indirect impacts on the Holderness Inshore MCZ and that a without prejudice Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) proposal is not required.'* End of Examination Position Regarding the original topic set-out in Natural England's Relevant Representations, the Applicants maintain that the methodology detailed in section 3.2.1 Assessment of Risk to Conservation Objectives within the **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment** [APP-240] follows the industry standard approach to assessing the risk of hindering the conservation objectives of any affected MCZs, and that the approach to defining magnitude detailed in this section matches that detailed in the Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects example noted in this response. With regards to the Deadline 4 comment from Natural England, the Applicants maintain their position at Deadline 4 that there is no potential for significant indirect impacts on the Holderness Inshore MCZ and that a without prejudice Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) proposal is not required. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B36	The impacts assessment does not consider sandwave levelling along the export cable corridor. We advise against deposition of sand in locations where SSC and deposition become significantly elevated above baseline level and suggest this is secured in the commitments register. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. The Applicants [AS-025] considers that as the offshore ECC doesn't overlap the MCZs, no direct effects will occur as a result of sandwave levelling. The Applicants have highlighted that increased SSC in the ECC from activities involved in seabed preparation for cable installation have been considered. We continue to advise against deposition of sand in locations where SSC and deposition become significantly elevated above baseline level, and that this is secured in the commitments register.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B54): '*The Offshore Export Cable Corridor does not overlap the Holderness inshore MCZ or Holderness Offshore MCZ and therefore no direct effects will occur as a result of sandwave levelling. Increased SSC in the Offshore Export Cable Corridor due to the seabed preparation for cable installation is considered throughout the **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment** [APP-240]. Seabed preparation for cable installation is considered to include all activities presented in section 5.1.3.1: boulder clearance, removal of existing out of service cables, pre-lay grapnel and sandwave levelling*'. Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028]: *'The Applicants maintain their position on this matter that no direct effects on the Holderness Inshore MCZ or Holderness Offshore MCZ will occur as a result of sandwave levelling.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. Natural England note the Applicant's request for clarification regarding locations for a commitment regarding no direct depositions. We propose to discuss this directly with the Applicant outside of the Examination in early May and will provide further comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. We are satisfied with the Applicant's assessment predictions that sediment deposition from trenching and levelling for the offshore export cable corridor is predicted to be localised and the seabed recoverable, however this is dependent on the appropriate mitigation being secured. Please see Appendix B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. We note that the Applicant does not intend to commit to depositing sediment updrift of dredging locations. No further information has been provided with respect to using a fall pipe for deposition. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant maintains their position [REP6-052] on not committing to depositing sediment updrift of dredging locations and that it is not technically feasible to use a fall pipe for deposition. We maintain our previous advice. See B17.	*With regards to the potential commitment proposed, the Applicants note that as described in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080], the only location where SSC and deposition may become significantly elevated above the baseline level is in the direct vicinity of any offshore cable trenches created for the Projects. Is this the area Natural England wish for no direct deposition of seabed material collected during seabed preparation activities to occur within?'* Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 to Point B17 of this table. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that all reasonable mitigation and monitoring proposals have been committed to by the Applicants with regards to potential sand wave levelling within **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] and the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)** [REP7-115]. With regards to the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B37	The mitigation measures to minimise scour protection do not provide certainty that impacts will be minimised to acceptable levels. Pre-construction surveys do not relate to either the MCZ or mitigation measures unless surveys cover	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England welcomes the Applicants commitments to not anchoring or using jack up	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B55): '*Following receipt of Relevant Representations from all interested parties, the Applicants have now committed to no anchoring being undertaken within the Holderness Inshore MCZ, therefore removing*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	the secondary impacts zone within the MCZ, and remedial actions are taken should impacts be greater than predicted. Further consideration is required of mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to the MCZ. (8.17).	vessels in the MCZ, however these aren't necessarily mitigating for scour protection impacts. Deadline 2 No change - we maintain our previous advice that commitments to not anchoring or using jack up vessels in the MCZ aren't necessarily mitigating for scour protection impacts and continue to advise that further consideration is required of mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to the MCZ. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 The Applicant's assumption [REP3-028] that we are referring to (scouring around) cable protection is correct. No change - see Point B4. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. See Point B4. Deadline 6 No change. We maintain our previous advice. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*the potential for any direct effects from the Projects on the site. The existing condition within the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 2)*** *[APP-027] regarding no use of jack-up vessels within the Holderness Inshore MCZ will be updated to reflect this new position on anchoring. In reflection of the above, there is no potential for any scour protection to be utilized in any MCZ'.* Deadline 2: The Applicants have responded to this point **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-067:B37): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment. However, scour protection is designed to minimise scour. Should secondary scour occur, the magnitude of sediment dispersion as a resulting from secondary scour would be considerably smaller when compared to the volume of sediment dispersed as a result of seabed preparation for foundation installation, which has been modelled and the results show that there is a negligible significance of effect on the receptors of the MCZs. Therefore, post construction monitoring of the MCZ is not proposed. Further, it should be noted that the Applicants have no proposals to deposit scour protection within, or in the vicinity of, any MCZs. Should any scour protection be used as the Projects are developed, its use will be confined to the Array Areas which are approximately 80km away from the nearest MCZ.*' Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028]: *'It is assumed that Natural England are referring to cable protection in this comment, and not to scour protection as is written, as scour protection would be deployed only within the Array Areas – many tens of kilometres away from any MCZs. Assuming that this is a correct interpretation of Natural England's representations, please see the Applicants' response regarding nearshore cable protection and potential impacts on sediment transport in REP2-064:2 above. In summary, the Applicants maintain their position that the potential installation of localised cable protection measures from 350m of MLWS up to the 10m depth contour, that would protrude 50cm above the seabed and would in all likelihood extend no more than 200 m in length on an aggregated basis, would have no effect in terms of sediment supply to the Spurn Head geological feature (a protected feature of the Holderness Inshore MCZ) which is located 40km away from the landfall, especially considering the extremely high volumes of sediment delivered to the Holderness coast through cliff erosion, given it is the fastest eroding coast in the UK. Please refer to the response to REP2-064:2 for further information.'* Meeting: In a meeting held with Natural England on 8th May 2025, the Applicants presented draft results of the nearshore physical processes modelling conducted to provide evidence that cable protection measures in the nearshore environment would not result in significant impacts to sediment transport processes in the Holderness region. The final modelling was submitted as part of the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] technical note submitted at Deadline 5.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that sufficient evidence has been provided within the A**ssessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] and **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] to rule out potential indirect effects on the Holderness Inshore MCZ from potential cable protection placed within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B38	We are concerned that temporary deterioration in condition is to be disregarded if the habitat is sufficiently healthy and resilient to enable recovery. Further evidence is required to demonstrate that impacts will be temporary, and recovery can occur in the short term. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide comments on [AS-104] 10.38 Benthic Ecology Technical Note at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No Change - we maintain our previous advice. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4, 5,6 and 7 No change.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B56): '*A separate technical note regarding the indirect effects of sediment deposition on the specific biotopes within the Holderness Inshore MCZ and Holderness Offshore MCZ will be submitted in late November 2024, which will present further evidence that was previously used to support the assessment conclusions reached in the **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment** [APP-240]'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028]: *'The Applicants maintain the position that the existing **Stage 1 MCZA** [APP-240] and **Benthic Ecology Technical Note** [AS-104] provide sufficient evidence (based on publicly available data and project-specific physical processes modelling) to support the conclusion that the conservation objectives of the Holderness Inshore MCZ and Holderness Offshore MCZ will not be hindered by the Projects. Should Natural England have any further information or evidence they believe should be considered regarding this matter, the Applicants request this to be shared for consideration later in the examination process.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B38): *'The Applicants direct Natural England to the updated version of **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [document reference 8.17] submitted at Deadline 7 which incorporates the updated nearshore modelling and assessment presented in **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040].'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that sufficient evidence has been provided within the A**ssessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] and **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] to demonstrate that any potential effects	

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			on the Holderness Inshore MCZ from potential cable protection placed within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor would be temporary in nature. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B39	Dogger Bank D OWF has not been included in the in-combination assessment for impacts to Spurn Point - we advise this is included. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - We continue to advise Dogger Bank D OWF is included in the in-combination assessment for impacts to Spurn Point. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. It is NE's understanding that Dogger Bank D S42 PEIR is to be consulted on from 6 June - 1 August 2025 and therefore within the timeframes of this Examination Deadline 5 & 6 No change. Deadline 7 No Change. However, we note that the Dogger Bank D S42 PEIR is now in the public domain. Therefore we advise that when determining DBS windfarms the Secretary of State considers Dogger Bank D in their HRA.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B58): *'The Scoping Report for Dogger Bank D11, publicly released following the submission of the Projects **Draft DCO (Revision 2)** [APP-027] Application in June 2024, does not state the potential location or indicative proportions of any cable protection measures to be used within that projects offshore export cable corridor. As such, there is insufficient information available at this time to include Dogger Bank D in the Projects cumulative assessment on the Spurn Head geological feature'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided in the above response. No further publicly available information regarding the project parameters for Dogger Bank D have been released following the submission of the above response. End of Examination Position The Applicants note that the Dogger Bank D PEIR was published on 10th June 2025. Given that this only left just over two weeks to potentially incorporate any information from the DBD PEIR into the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2) (Clean)** [REP7-111] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants did not update the Stage 1 MCZA to incorporate Dogger Bank D into the in-combination assessment. The Applicants also note that the DBD worst case design parameters could change in response to PEIR feedback and further environmental information could be considered as the project progresses. Note that the PDE includes foundation types for gravity-based structures and suction caissons, which were removed for the Projects' PDE. DBD will provide an updated and comprehensive in-combination assessment including their impacts when they submit a DCO application in 2026. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact'	
B40	Further mitigation could be applied to avoid potential impacts to sediment transport on the MCZ. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2	The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B35 – RR-039: B42). Deadline 3 See the response to Point B23 of this document provided at Deadline 3 and Table 2-9 of **The Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP2-028], reiterated here for ease:	

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		No change - Please see Appendix B2 and our comments on the Benthic Technical note [AS-104] included within Deadline 2 Appendix C2.1. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP3-028] that a technical note will be provided at Deadline 5 regarding the potential effects of cable protection measures on sediment transport in the nearshore environment. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail on our outstanding concerns regarding the placement of nearshore cable protection. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*'In **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085], the Applicants have assessed impacts to all biotopes / habitats within the Offshore Development Area which may give rise to effects of significance in EIA terms. It is not proportionate to assess all habitats / biotopes within a 14km ZoI from the Array Areas / 28km from the nearshore Offshore Export Cable installation activities when the only impact will be from indirect increases in Suspended Sediment Concentrations (SSCs) (and deposition). **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] assessed the impacts of changes in SSCs, finding the significance of effect to be negligible. Any increases in SSCs are expected to be short-lived and are predicted to return to baseline conditions within hours of the disturbance due to dispersion and dilution. Therefore, any effects will be temporary.* *Within the **Benthic Ecology Technical Note** [AS-104], paragraph 4, the Applicants refer to the WCS in Table 9-1 of **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085]. As Project Change Request 1 has also been accepted by the Examining Authority, the Applicants direct Natural England to the updates to the WCS as shown in Table 4-3 of **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141].* *The Applicants have assessed the biotopes / habitats which comprise each qualifying feature of the protected area using the MarESA sensitivity assessment. For example, the assessment for Flamborough Head SAC uses the Natural England's Designated Sites View website for cable laying, as this is the most relevant construction activity category, which then suggests 55 separate biotopes relevant to intertidal rock. These biotopes have a sensitivity to pressure range of not sensitive – medium to the impact of 'smothering and siltation rate changes (light)'. This sensitivity* range has been *presented in Table 5-3. The highest sensitivity (i.e. medium in this example) along with the magnitude of impact is what the significance of effect is based on.* *The Applicants have updated the **Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)** [document reference 10.38] which has been submitted at Deadline 3 to include the additional detail for the biotopes and species that comprise the qualifying features of the Holderness Offshore and Inshore MCZs and the Flamborough Head SAC.* *Regarding Natural England's comment on single discrete events, installation of the Offshore Export Cables and array / Inter-Platform Cables for the Projects would not take place simultaneously, they would occur over a period of several years. It can be considered that any potential 'light' smothering occurrences would occur as discrete events, as per the MarESA benchmarks.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that sufficient evidence has been provided within the A**ssessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] and **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] to rule out potential indirect effects on the Holderness Inshore MCZ from potential cable protection placed within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor and that additional mitigation measures are not required. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment**	

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			(Revision 2) [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B41	The conservation objectives for the Holderness Inshore MCZ could be hindered due to the current dML condition allowing 10% of the export cable to be protected from 350m seaward of MLWS to the 10m depth contour. This could disrupt sediment transport associated with Holderness Inshore MCZ. (8.17).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - Please see Appendix B2 and our comments on the Benthic Technical note [AS-104] included within Deadline 2 Appendix C2.1. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. See Point B23. Deadline 5 No change. The Applicant has indicated [REP4-088] that a technical note will be provided at Deadline 5 regarding the potential effects of cable protection measures on sediment transport in the nearshore environment. We will provide further comments accordingly. Deadline 6 No change. Following review of the Applicant's updated coastal processes assessment, we maintain the view that it cannot be ruled out that the conservation objectives of the Holderness Inshore MCZ will be hindered. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B35 – RR-039: B42). Deadline 3 Please see the response provided for Point B40 at Deadline 3, above. Deadline 6 The Applicants await Natural England's comments on the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] issued at Deadline 5. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B42): *'The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses on this matter in Table 2-15 and Table 2-17 of this document.* *The Applicants disagree that there remains uncertainty in the assessment, and that Natural England have been provided sufficient evidence to rule out the potential that the conservation objectives of the Holderness Inshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) could be hindered.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that sufficient evidence has been provided within the A**ssessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] and **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] to rule out potential indirect effects on the Holderness Inshore MCZ from potential cable protection placed within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Stage 1 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Revision 2)** [REP7-111] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
Assessment of SSSI Impacts – Document(s) Used:				
B42	It is stated that there is a potential for impacts to Withow Gap Skipsea SSSI due to cable	Deadline 1	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B62):	

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	installation/removal. However, it is our understanding that the landfall option with the potential to interact with this SSSI has been withdrawn. We advise that the impact assessment is updated as needed. (7.8).	Issue Progressed. The Applicants have confirmed that the Projects no longer directly interact with the SSSI as part of any landfall works but that it was included for consideration of any potential indirect effects. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No change. Deadline 3 No change. The Applicants previously stated that Withow Gap SSSI had been included for consideration of any potential indirect effects. It is not clear where potential impacts to Withow Gap SSSI have been considered following the changes made to the project design envelope through the Change Request. We request the Applicants to signpost where this has been considered. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 The Applicant has indicated [REP4-088] that the reduced WCS as a result of the Project Change Request 1 has resulted in a change to the receptors assessed, including Withow Gap SSSI and that the assessment to landfall works will be updated in a technical note to be submitted at Deadline 5. We will provide further comment accordingly. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicant has clarified [REP5-040] that as the exit pits are in the subtidal zone, there will be no direct impact to Withow Gap, Skipsea	*'The Applicants can confirm that following the removal of Landfall 9 after PEIR consultation, the Projects no longer directly interact with the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as part of any landfall works. The assessment presented in section 8.7.3.9 of* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] notes that the final landfall is located near the Withow Gap, Skipsea SSSI and so was considered for any potential indirect effects of the Projects. This assessment concluded a minor adverse effect due to a negligible magnitude of impact and high sensitivity.* *However, the Applicants are in process of preparing a change request relating to a number of design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (****Change Notification Letter*** *[PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request will be supported by the* ***Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update*** *[document reference: C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES and RIAA. This information will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of the change request in early January. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts.* *The change proposed of relevance to this comment is the removal of the short trenchless crossing option from the Projects' Design Envelope. Should this change be accepted, there will no potential impact pathway between the Projects and the Withow Gap, Skipsea SSSI'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]: *'Withow Gap SSSI was considered as a receptor in the assessment of changes to bedload sediment transport due to cable installation at the landfall in section 8.7.3.9 of* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080].* *Changes to the project design outlined in* ***Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works*** *[AS-141] results in a reduced worse case as the exit pits will be located in the subtidal area. This results in a change to the receptors assessed, including Withow Gap SSSI. The assessment in relation to landfall works will therefore be updated in a landfall technical note to be submitted at Deadline 5.'* Deadline 5 The Applicants submitted an **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP5-040] at Deadline 5 which included an updated assessment in relation to landfall works. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material	

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		SSSI. We advise that relevant ES chapters are updated to resolve this matter.	impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] for Deadline 9.	
Disposal of material arising from construction activities – Document(s) Used:				
B43	This document will need updating pre-consent based on comments Natural England has provided on the EIA within Appendix B and C as currently we do not agree with conclusions on the level of impacts. (8.18).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue is likely to be submitted by the Applicants and we will review once submitted. Deadline 3 No change. Natural England have provided comments on the updated Disposal Site Characterisation Report [REP2-036] in Appendix B3, however the updates made are largely to bring the report in line with the Change Request. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 An updated Disposal Site Characterisation Report has been submitted [REP5-026]. Please see comments below and Appendix B6 of our Deadline 6 submission. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses stated within this table and Table 2.4.1 in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048]. Deadline 3 See the response proved in Point B1 of this table at Deadline 3 regarding the updating of the ES and RIAA above, which also applies to the MCZA. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP6-072: B15 and B16 in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:B43): REP6-072:B15 *'The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP5-054: B15 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052], repeated below for convenience:* *The values provided in the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [document reference 8.20] are preliminary values based on the latest available survey data collected for the Projects but cannot at this time be considered final as further survey work is required, further design work is to be undertaken, and installation methods are to be developed – all of which may significantly affect the dredge volumes required to deliver the Projects. As such, while the Applicants recognise the difference between the values stated in the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [document reference 8.20] and the Environmental Statement (ES), to ensure an absolute worst case was assessed in the ES it was assumed that dredging would occur along the entire length of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. Given the assessment presented in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] already concludes that no significant effects may occur as a result of potential dredging activities for the Projects, there would be no material difference in the assessment conclusions should the figure stated in the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [document reference 8.20] be used instead.* *The Applicants note that the volume of dredging of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor for DBS East in isolation has been reduced to 16,560,900m³ following the commitment to the bundling of Offshore Export Cables in pairs. This revised figure will be included in the next revision of **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7.* *The Applicants do not intend to make any further amendments to the dredge volumes proposed prior to the close of examination'* REP6-072:B16 *'While the exact location of the proposed exit pits cannot be confirmed at this time, the Applicants confirmed in response to REP5-061: C2 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents***	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			[REP6-052] that the subtidal exit pits would not be located within 350m seaward of mean low water springs. This commitment was included in the ***Cable Statement (Revision 5)*** *[REP6-043] submitted at Deadline 6. The precise details of construction are matters to be determined as part of detailed design and will be controlled through the Deemed Marine Licence Condition discharged against* relevant *conditions such as those presented in condition 15 in Deemed Marine Licence 1 of the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 10)*** *[document reference 3.1].* *The* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 8.23] contains provisions for the delivery of bathymetric and side scan sonar surveys which can be used to assess the backfill of the trenchless crossing exit pits. A note to this effect has been added to the* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 8.23] submitted at Deadline 7.* *The Applicants note that each Deemed Marine Licence contains provisions for the post-consent agreement of the details of monitoring, such as condition 19(1) of Deemed Marine Licence 1. This condition states that:* *The undertaker must, in discharging condition 13(1)(b), for each phase of construction submit details (which accord with the in principle monitoring plan) for approval in writing by the MMO in consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies of any proposed monitoring and surveys, including methodologies and timings, to be carried out during the construction of the authorised scheme. The survey proposals must specify each survey's objectives and explain how it will assist in either informing a useful and valid comparison with the preconstruction position and/or will enable the validation or otherwise of key predictions in the environmental statement.* *The Applicants therefore suggest that the detail of this monitoring can be agreed post-consent.'* Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
B44	The whole of the offshore windfarm array footprints, the inter-cable platform corridor and the export cable corridors will be disposal locations, but deposition will only occur where possible within the same sediment. Given that sandwave levelling is likely to be undertaken by suction hopper dredge and then sediment released at the sea surface, it is unlikely that this will occur. We advise that disposal options are explored to ensure that sediment is deposited in similar sediment types. (8.18).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. This has not been addressed in Revision 2 of the Disposal Site Characterisation Report [REP2-036]. Deadline 4	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B64): '*As a variety of sediment types are present on the Dogger Bank, the Applicants believe that stipulating material to be disposed must be placed on the same material type cannot be guaranteed and would be difficult and onerous to apply in reality. Dredging, particularly for the linear aspects of the Projects such as the subsea cable installations, may occur over a variety of sediment types to allow installation to occur. The resultant mixed cargo could not be disposed of on any single, specific material type. Hence, strict adherence with this request would be difficult to achieve. However, in line with the request made by Natural England. However, the Projects can commit to including detail relating to sandwave levelling and deposition within the* ***Cable Statement*** *[APP-242]. An update of this document will be submitted in late November 2024. However, it is likely that the sediment will be disposed of in the permanent cable burial corridor within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, and the Applicants will try to avoid areas of priority habitats under Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) 2006, by the inclusion of a 50m buffer around the NERC habitats*'. Deadline 3	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No change. The Applicant has stated [REP3-028] that they can commit to depositing like sediment on like sediment (within Dogger Bank SAC) and has indicated that an updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-028] to reflect such changes. We will provide further comment accordingly. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. The Applicant has committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment both within and outside of Dogger Bank SAC in the updated Cable Statement, this should be secured in the Commitment Register. Please see Appendix B5 for further advice on outstanding mitigation measures. Deadline 6 No change. We note that the Applicant does not intend to commit to depositing sediment updrift of dredging locations. No further information has been provided with respect to using a fall pipe for deposition. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change. See Points B17 and B36.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'See the Applicants' response to this matter in Table 2-7, REP2-065:3.1 to REP2-065:3.6 above.* *The Applicants have committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment within the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC, thus ensuring, as Natural England have requested, that sediment both remains within the system and sandbank recovery is enabled.'* Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position outlined in REP5-054: B12 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052], repeated below for convenience: • *Disposition of dredge sediment should be adjacent to and slightly upstream of the sandbank to actively encourage recovery of structure and function.* *The Applicants have not proposed depositing sediment updrift of areas of dredging activity. In the Applicants' view, doing so would incur potentially avoidable environmental impacts. The reason for this is that there may be yet to be determined time lags between the completion of dredging in an area and the delivery of any associated construction activities. Logic dictates that, in such a scenario, the dredged sediment may well move through natural process into the previously dredged area. Should this happen further dredging would then be required. Self-evidently this additional seabed preparation would cause avoidable environmental effects.* • *A downpipe/fall pipe should be used to enable targeted disposition as set out above.* *As previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, can make no commitments to delivering it. If Natural England can demonstrate the feasibility of this request, then the Applicants will give it further consideration.* End of Examination Position The Applicants have not proposed depositing sediment updrift of areas of dredging activity. In the Applicants' view, doing so would incur potentially avoidable environmental impacts. The reason for this is that there may be yet to be determined time lags between the completion of dredging in an area and the delivery of any associated construction activities. Logic dictates that, in such a scenario, the dredged sediment may well move through natural process into the previously dredged area. Should this happen further dredging would then be required. Self-evidently this additional seabed preparation would cause avoidable environmental effects. Regarding the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it.	
B45	We advise the mitigation in Section 5.2 does not go far enough, especially within the Dogger Bank SAC and in areas where there are priority habitats and/or indirect impacts to designated site features could occur. We advise that the following mitigation measures are adopted (but not exclusively): - All deposition of dredged sediment within the Dogger Bank SAC should be done through the use of a fall pipe and adjacent and upstream of the dredge location in same sediment type to ensure sediment stays within the site. - Drill arisings should be deposited within similar sediment characteristics i.e. not on sandbanks. Therefore, adjacent to turbines is unlikely to be appropriate. - Sandwave deposition should avoid areas of priority habitats under NERC 2006 by the inclusion of a 50m buffer around the NERC habitats. - Deposition of dredge material along the export cable should utilise a fall pipe where there is a risk of increases in suspended sediment concentrations impacting on designated site features and those of ecological importance. (8.18).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - see point B36 and B44 and Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. This has not been addressed in Revision 2 of the Disposal Site Characterisation Report [REP2-036]. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has stated [REP3-028] that they can commit to depositing like sediment on like sediment (within Dogger Bank SAC) and has indicated that an updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-028] to reflect such changes. We will provide further comment accordingly. However, we note that both Five Estuaries and Outer Dowsing OWF Applicant's have committed to use of a fall pipe adjacent and upstream of the dredge location in same sediment type to ensure sediment stays within the site. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. The Applicant has committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment both within and outside of Dogger Bank SAC in the updated Cable Statement, this should be secured in the Commitment Register. Please see Appendix B5 for further advice on outstanding mitigation measures. Deadline 6 No change. We note that the Applicant does not intend to commit to depositing sediment updrift of	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B65): '*The Applicants have not yet defined the dredging methodology as the requirements will depend on the cable installation methodology and the associated requirements for seabed preparation (quantity and location of sediment to be dredged).* *The Applicants therefore cannot commit to using a fall pipe and redepositing the sediment upstream of the dredged location. However, The Applicants can commit to not disposing of sediment by rainbowing.* *As a variety of sediment types are present on the Dogger Bank, the Applicants believe that stipulating material to be disposed must be placed on the same material type cannot be guaranteed and would be difficult and onerous to apply in reality. Dredging, particularly for the linear aspects of the Projects such as the subsea cable installations, may occur over a variety of sediment types to allow installation to occur. The resultant mixed cargo could not be disposed of on any single, specific material type. Hence, strict adherence with this request would be difficult to achieve. However, in line with the request made by Natural England. However, the Projects can commit to including detail relating to sandwave levelling and deposition within the **Cable Statement** [APP-242]. An update of this document will be submitted late November 2024. However, it is likely that the sediment will be disposed of in the permanent cable burial corridor within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, and the Applicants will try to avoid areas of priority habitats under NERC 2006, by the inclusion of a 50m buffer around the NERC habitats*'. Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: '*See the Applicant's response to this matter in **Table 2-7**, REP2-065:3.1 to REP2-065:3.6 and REP2-065: 8.2 above.* *The Applicants have committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment within the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC, thus ensuring, as Natural England have requested, that sediment both remains within the system and sandbank recovery is enabled.* *As regards the use of a fall pipe, or 'down pipe', the Applicants' dredging specialists are not aware of a TSHD vessel that that would meet the requirements of the Projects that possesses a fall pipe or down pipe deposition facility. If Natural England are able to demonstrate the existence of such vessels that might meet the needs of the Projects, then the Applicants will further consider the practicability of this request. The Applicants cannot commit to delivering mitigation that they do not regard as technically feasible.'* Deadline 5	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		dredging locations. No further information has been provided with respect to using a fall pipe for deposition. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 No change. See Points B17 and B36.	See the Applicants' response to REP4-126: 31 regarding the proposed use of a fall pipe in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037]: *'The Applicants note that Outer Dowsing do not appear to have made any commitment to use a fall pipe, as suggested by Natural England. Further, the Applicants note that the question asked here was for Natural England to provide evidence of the existence of dredging vessels suitable for use on the Projects which are equipped with fall pipes. The Applicants are not aware of the existence of such vessels and cannot make commitments that they do not believe are technically feasible.'* The Applicants note that Natural England's advice is inaccurate and Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm (OWF) does not appear to have made any such commitment to the use of a fall pipe. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 for Point B44, above. In addition, the Applicants direct Natural England to the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5**) [REP6-043] submitted at Deadline 6 which contains updated mitigation proposals. End of Examination Position The Applicants have not proposed depositing sediment updrift of areas of dredging activity. In the Applicants' view, doing so would incur potentially avoidable environmental impacts. The reason for this is that there may be yet to be determined time lags between the completion of dredging in an area and the delivery of any associated construction activities. Logic dictates that, in such a scenario, the dredged sediment may well move through natural process into the previously dredged area. Should this happen further dredging would then be required. Self-evidently this additional seabed preparation would cause avoidable environmental effects. Regarding the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it.	
B46	For intertidal exit pits, we advise that alternative storage options for material from the landfall exit pits are explored (see also comments (B15) Appendix B).	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B66). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue resolved. As detailed in [AS-141], the short trenchless crossing and intertidal exit pits have been removed from the project design envelope.		
B46.1	It is stated in [REP2-036] that within the arrays, seabed level could be increased by up to 0.5m where multiple cable corridors merge, but in practice the cable layout will be designed to avoid this - we require clarity on how and where this will be secured.	Deadline 3 New issue Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. The Applicant has stated [REP4-088] the "0.5m increase in seabed level is in reference to the worst-case increase in sediment accumulation calculated in the marine physical processes modelling undertaken for the Projects" and that they are unable to secure a change in seabed level of up to 0.5m as sediment transport isn't static. We request the Applicant to clarify how avoiding exceedance of the worst-case increase of 0.5m will be carried out and associated control measures. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change. We consider that the information provided by the Applicant in [REP6-052] regarding avoidance of exceedance of sediment accumulation and post construction monitoring within the IPMP is not detailed enough to address our concerns. We require further clarification on this matter.	Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]: '*The figure of a 0.5m increase in seabed level is in reference to the worst-case increase in sediment accumulation calculated in the marine physical processes modelling undertaken for the Projects. The modelling has shown that up to 0.5m of sediment could be deposited in and around the Offshore Platform (see Figure D-42 of* ***Appendix 8-3 Marine Physical Processes Modelling Technical Report (Revision 3)*** *[REP2-0018]) where multiple inter-array cables come together. This is because there is a greater density of cables in this area and the modelling assumes that sediment deposition is cumulative e.g. the sediment deposited during trenching of one array cable is overlain by sediment deposited during the installation of the adjacent array cable. This will not be the case as two cables will not be installed adjacent to one another during the same time period (two cable vessels cannot operate adjacent to one another) and natural sediment transport processes will redistribute the sediment deposited during the installation of the first cable, before deposition of material disturbed by trenching of the adjacent cable. The higher density of array cables in the vicinity of the Offshore Platform cannot be avoided by design as they need to connect to a single platform. The overarching project design is secured in in Schedule 2 Part 1 of the* ***Draft Development Consent Order (Revision 7)*** *[document reference 3.1]). In any case, it would not be possible to secure a change in seabed level of up to 0.5m as sediment transport is not static and is constantly changing.*' Deadline 6 The Applicants stated t in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: B46.1): '*Avoiding the circumstances which could lead to an exceedance of the worst case increase of 0.5m sediment accumulation will be undertaken as part of the cable layout design. The requirement for the final cable layout for the Projects (which will be designed to avoid multiple cable corridors merging together) to be approved by the MMO in consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation body (i.e. Natural England) is secured under Condition 15 (1)(a)(iii) of DMLs 1 & 2, Condition 13 (1)(a)(iii) of DMLs 3 & 4 and Condition 11(1)(a)(iii) of DML 5 of the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 9)*** *[document reference: 3.1].* *The post-construction monitoring plan for the Marine Physical Environment (detailed in Table 1-2 of the* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 4)*** *[REP5-027] would assess for potential sediment accumulation in areas where any cable corridors merged. The In Principle Monitoring Plan is secured in Condition 15 of DMLs 1 and 2; Condition 13 of DMLs 3 and 4, and Condition 11 of DML5 of the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 9)*** *[document reference: 3.1].*'	

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			Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position stated above at Deadline 6. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that the position stated above at Deadline 6 provides sufficient clarity on how the cable layout will be designed to avoid areas of sediment accumulation, and the mechanism for Natural England to input into the final layout of cabling within the Array Areas. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
Scour Prevention – Document(s) Used:				
B47	We advise that this document needs to better consider the risk and implications of secondary scour occurring. (8.27).	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide comments on [AS-081] 8.27 Outline Scour Protection Plan (Rev 02) at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change. We maintain our advice as set out in Appendix C2.1 [REP2-065] of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission. See Deadline 3 Appendix J for further detail on secondary scour considerations in the IPMP. Deadline 4 No change. We welcome the Applicants' clarification [REP3-028] on the WCS figures presented. However, outstanding concerns remain regarding seabed mobility, bedform formation and migration and scour potential (see Appendix B4 of our Deadline 4 submission). We also advise that monitoring of secondary scour needs to be better secured in the IPMP. See Appendix C4 of our Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B67): '*The risk and implications of secondary scour occurring have been considered by the Applicants in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] where it was concluded that any secondary scour effects associated with scour protection would be confined to within a few metres of the direct footprint of that scour protection material. Post-construction surveys are proposed to monitor scour protection measures and secondary scour in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] and the **In-Principle Monitoring Plan** [APP-247]. Monitoring will be used to identify the extent, volume and integrity of any scour protection used and determine whether remedial action is required (**In-Principle Monitoring Plan** [APP-247])'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'The worst case scenario would not be exceeded through the life of the Projects. As such, this figure gives account to any secondary scour protection that might be required. In any event, secondary scour (around the edge of the scour protection itself) will be minimised through the scour protection design, such as through minimising the height of the scour protection and making the side slopes relatively gentle.* *The Applicants note that through the recently accepted **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] the worst case scenario for scour protection deployment has reduced significantly from 768,736m2 to 639,682m2.* *As regards the construction of the worst case figures, as stated in RR-039: C13 in **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048]:* *The maximum design parameters reflect the levels of scour and cable protection that could be required for the Projects during construction and / or operation. As such they represent the maximum proposed levels for installation during construction and no revisions are proposed to the levels presented within the worst case scenarios as a result.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 6 Issue progressed. Natural England welcomes that commitments to monitoring secondary scour have been strengthened in the IPMP [REP5-028]. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail regarding scour monitoring. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*As stated in section 5.5.5.1 of* ***Chapter 5 Project Description (Revision 3)*** *[REP1-009]:* *All figures are presented on a worst case basis e.g. for wind turbine foundations, the maximum footprint described is that which would result from the installation of the highest possible number of small monopile foundations (all with scour protection), which is the scenario with the largest footprint on the seabed.* *As is acknowledged in the document titles, the* ***Outline Scour Protection Plan (Revision 3)*** *[REP2-052] and the* ***Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (Revision 3)*** *[REP2-046] are outline documents pending finalisation prior to construction when final design details are available. The final documents in accordance with the outline documents will be presented to the MMO as part of the process of discharging relevant DML conditions.* *Please see the response to REP2-065:6 for an outline of the Applicants' intended approach to managing cable and scour protection deployment through the operational period of the Projects.* *The Applicants trust that Natural England will find this explanation clear.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-122: B9): *'The Applicants have added further detail and a firmer commitment to monitoring the performance and integrity of scour protection and secondary scour to the* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 4)*** *[document reference 8.23], submitted at Deadline 5.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-072: B17): *'The* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 8.23] contains provisions for the delivery of bathymetric and side scan sonar surveys which can be used to assess these matters.* *The Applicants note that each Deemed Marine Licence contains provisions for the post-consent agreement of the details of monitoring, such as condition 19(1) of Deemed Marine Licence 1 in the* ***Draft DCO (Revision 10)*** *[document reference 3.1]. This condition states that:* *The undertaker must, in discharging condition 13(1)(b), for each phase of construction submit details (which accord with the in principle monitoring plan) for approval in writing by the MMO in consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies of any proposed monitoring and surveys, including methodologies and timings, to be carried out during the construction of the authorised scheme. The survey proposals must specify each survey's objectives and explain how it will assist in either informing a useful and valid comparison with the preconstruction position and/or will enable the validation or otherwise of key predictions in the environmental statement.* *If nearshore external cable protection is installed it will be monitored along with any associated scour. This has been noted in the* ***In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 8.23] submitted at Deadline 7.'*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that the updates provided at Deadline 7 and summarised above provide sufficient clarity regarding potential secondary scour monitoring for this matter to be closed. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **IPMP (Revision 5)** [document reference: 8.23] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
B48	Section 1.2 - Consideration should be given to comments made in relation to minimising environmental impacts as much as possible through the choice of scour prevention/cable protection. Every effort should be made to avoid using those that are least likely to be recovered at the time of decommissioning. (8.27).	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change - We refer you to Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission and the link to Natural England's published paper on decommissioning of cable protection. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. See Point B7, B24. Deadline 5 No change. See Point B7 and B24. Deadline 6 No change. We maintain our previous advice. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail with regards to removability of cable protection. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicants have committed [REP6-044] to consider removability of cable protection as part of the development of the final Cable Statement and Decommissioning Programme to be produced for submission to the SoS pre	The Applicants acknowledged this comment and suggested seeing the responses with the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] Table 2.4.1 and Table 2.3.1. Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-065:7.1 and REP2-065:7.2), and also reiterated in Points B7 and B30 (REP2-065:7.2) of this table at Deadline 3. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-072: B14): *'The Applicants noted that the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] contains commitments to facilitate the avoidance of use, and minimisation, of cable protection. The Cable Statement notes that the:* *"removability of external cable protection will be considered as part of the development of the final Cable Statement(s). An assessment of the different types of protection will be included in both the final Cable Statement(s) and the Decommissioning Programme(s) to be produced for submission to the Secretary of State prior to the commencement of construction"* *The **Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)** (Revision 10) [document reference 3.1] includes requirement 7 which ensures that a written decommissioning programme must be submitted to the Secretary of State prior to commencement of each Project's offshore works. The Applicants would therefore hope that these issues are resolved.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that the updates provided at Deadline 7 and summarised above provide sufficient clarity regarding consideration of the removability of scour protection for this matter to be closed.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		construction. However, we maintain our previous advice. See Point B7 above.		
Cable Statement – Document(s) Used:				
B49	This document will need updating pre-consent based on comments Natural England has provided on the EIA within Appendix B and C, as we currently do not agree with conclusions included within the document. (8.20)	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. Natural England welcomes the Applicants commitment to the separate bundling of pairs of the export cables as outlined in the updated Cable Statement [AS-079] and advise that this commitment is secured in the DCO. This is notwithstanding other outstanding issues such as updates to the CBRA being required. Deadline 2 No change. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Cable Statement [REP2-040] has been updated with an updated CBRA for the Export Cable Route, but not the Array Areas. Further, clarification is needed on whether the results of the ECR Preliminary CBRA alter the MDS for ECR cable protection, particularly within the 10m depth contour. See Appendix B3 of our Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No change - the Applicant has indicated that an updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4, however the CBRA will not be updated again within Examination timeframes. Deadline 5 Natural England welcomes that the Cable Statement [REP4-051] has been updated with a commitment to deposit like sediment on like sediment both within and beyond the boundary of Dogger Bank SAC during sandwave levelling. We maintain our previous advice for a figure to be provided identifying cable burial	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B69): '*The Applicants consider that the scale of impacts from cable installation and cable protection is fully justified within the worst case Table 8-1 within **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] and Table 6-3 within the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]). Furthermore, the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) and **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] and **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] are point in time documents that reflect the position of the Applicants at the time of submission. These will not be updated.* *The **Cable Statement** [APP-244] will continue to be updated throughout the lifetime of the Projects, including any potential additional mitigation agreed by the Applicants. Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the project envelope or stakeholder comments will be captured though submissions to the Examination.* *Additionally, the Applicants are in the process of preparing a change request relating to the relevant design parameters. The Examining Authority (ExA) was notified of the Applicants' intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted to the ExA in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request relates to the removal of an intertidal Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) exit from the Projects' Design Envelope, the removal of all platforms from the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, reductions in the number of platforms in the Array Areas and overall reductions in cable lengths within the Array Areas. The change request will be supported by the **Request for Design Change – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES, thus informing a consultation with relevant stakeholders (as agreed by the ExA) as part of the change request process. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts. These factors, if the change request is accepted, may result in changes to the values discussed above. However, although the quantum of impact will be reduced the significance of effect will remain the same'.* Deadline 2: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-067:B49): '*The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The commitment to cable bundling has been made in the **Cable Statement (Revision 2)** [AS-078]. Each Deemed Marine Licence (Schedules 10-14) presented in the **Draft DCO (Revision 5)** [REP1-004] contains a condition (such as condition 15 (1) (g) in Schedule 10) which states that construction activities may not commence until a final cable statement (in accordance with the cable statement) has been submitted to and approved in writing by MMO, in*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		risks. Please see Appendix B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicant has stated that an updated final Cable Statement will be produced for submission to the SoS. This will include a sandwave levelling, deposition, and recovery plan and consideration of removability of cable protection measures. However, our other recommendations at Rel Reps will need to be addressed.	*consultation with Trinity House, the MCA, the relevant statutory nature conservation body and UKHO as appropriate. Through this mechanism this commitment is secured by the Draft DCO as it stands and no updates to the Application are necessary.'* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'The Applicants can confirm that the worst case scenario proposed for external cable protection on application remains valid as the CBRAs are preliminary and the details therein are subject to future change as site information improves and designs progress. It is for these reason that the Applicants are seeking to consent a worst case envelope. As such, no changes to the worst case scenario proposed for external cable protection are proposed either within or without the 10 m depth contour.* *A preliminary Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) for the Array Areas is included in Appendix A of the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [document reference: 8.20]. An updated preliminary CBRA for the Export Cable Corridor was submitted at Deadline 2 – see **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-039]. The Applicants would like to reiterate that the final versions of the CBRAs will not be completed within the time frame of examination. There will be no further updates to any existing CBRAs within the time frame of examination. Further updates to the preliminary CBRAs are dependent on future survey and design work which is not scheduled to be completed within the Examination timetable.'* Deadline 6 A figure presenting the indicative locations of cable protection in relation to nearby designated site boundaries has been included in the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043]] issued at Deadline 6. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: B49): *'A figure presenting the indicative locations of cable protection in relation to nearby designated site boundaries was included in the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] issued at Deadline 6.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that following the substantial updates made through the course of Examination to the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] to address Natural England's comments, this matter is closed.	
B50	The estimated maximum dredge volumes for ECR options B and C, based on the 2022 bathymetry, are 227,886m3 and 297,391m3 respectively. However, it is unclear how these values relate to the Maximum Design scenario (MDS) parameters	Deadline 3 New issue. Deadline 4	Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]:	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	presented in either ES Chapter 8 [APP-080] or the Project Change Request 1 [AS-141]. We require the Applicants clarification on the MDS dredge volume values for the ECR.	No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. The Applicant has clarified [REP4-088] that the offshore export cable route (ECR) dredge volumes in the Cable Statement [REP4-051] are indicative locations that may require dredging based on the most recent site-specific bathymetric (2022) data, whereas the WCS assessed in the ES Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] and Offshore Works Change Request [AS-141] were based on a worst-case scenario whereby dredging would occur along the entire length of the export cable route (ECR). However, we are concerned that an error has been made in the values presented in [AS-141] and advise that further justification is needed for the volumes as applied for. Please see Appendix B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. We note that Table 7-1 of the Disposal Site Characterisation Report [REP5-026] of worst case scenario volumes have been updated to reflect cable bundling. However, this still does not address our concerns as set out in Appendix B5 of our Deadline 5 submission [REP5-054]. Deadline 7 No change. The Applicant considers [REP6-052] that as the assessment in Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] already concludes that no significant effects would occur as a result of potential dredging activities for the Projects, there would be no material difference in the assessment conclusions should the figures stated in the Cable Statement (Revision 5) be used instead. The Applicant further clarifies that the dredging volume of the OECC for DBS East in isolation has been reduced to 16,560,900m³ following the commitment to the bundling of cables and that a revised figure will be	*'The maximum dredge volumes for the Offshore Export Cable Corridor detailed in Table 27 of Appendix B of the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [document reference: 8.20] are based on indicative locations within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor that may require dredging to enable installation of the Offshore Export Cable(s). These locations and figures are indicative at this stage however, and do not represent the final parameters for installation of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor.* *As such, to ensure the worst-case scenario was assessed the Maximum Design scenario detailed in the **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] and **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] was based on the worst-case assumption that dredging would occur across the entire length of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor.* *It should be considered that anticipated dredge volumes are likely to change as site information increases, designs progress and the final cable statements and CBRAs are prepared and submitted for approval in line with the conditions of the Deemed Marine Licences, but will not increase over the worst-case volumes assessed in the ES.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-054: B15): *'The values provided in the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-051] are preliminary values based on the latest available survey data collected for the Projects, but cannot at this time be considered final as further survey work is required, further design work is to be undertaken and installation methods are to be developed – all of which may significantly affect the dredge volumes required to deliver the Projects. As such, while the Applicants recognise the difference between the values stated in the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-051] and the Environmental Statement (ES), to ensure an absolute worst case was assessed in the ES it was assumed that dredging would occur along the entire length of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. Given the assessment presented in **Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] already concludes that no significant effects may occur as a result of potential dredging activities for the Projects, there would be no material difference in the assessment conclusions should the figure stated in the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-051] be used instead.* *The Applicants note that the volume of dredging of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor for DBS East in isolation has been reduced to 16,560,900m³ following the commitment to the bundling of Offshore Export Cables in pairs. This revised figure will be included in the next revision of **Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants confirm that an updated version of **Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] will be submitted at Deadline 7 and will include the updated landfall assessment work as detailed in the **Assessment of Coastal Processes at the Dogger Bank South Landfall** [REP4-088] report issued at Deadline 5. Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position stated at Deadline 5, above.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix B - Marine Physical Environment	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		included in the next revision of Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment [APP-080] to be submitted at Deadline 7. We will provide further comment accordingly.	End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as outline at Deadline 5. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

3.4 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology

Table 3-4 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Benthic and Intertidal Ecology

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
C1	There are inconsistencies in the impact assessment calculations across the various chapters/documents. For example, maximum anchoring footprint for export cable installation, total array areas and offshore ECC cable corridor construction footprint etc. We advise that the maximum temporary construction footprints are reviewed and updated where necessary. (7.05)	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. The Applicants have clarified the differences in values presented and confirmed that some were incorrect. We advise that the relevant ES chapters and documents are updated as needed. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No Change. Whilst Table 4-3 in [AS-141] provides updated Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for the impact assessment; we maintain that relevant application documents should be updated to reflect these changes. Deadline 4 No change - updates to ES documents are required to resolve. We will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C8): • *Maximum anchoring footprint – The Applicants note the 44,091m² was an error in the original ES, and agree the total is 44,122m². This change will be incorporated in any future revisions of this assessment, and has been included in the parameters presented in the **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1]. It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation.* • *As noted in Table 9-1 of **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] the final totals were based on the unrounded figures of the parameters detailed in that table. As such, there is a small variation in the total figures stated in the table compared to the figure reached when adding the rounded figures of each parameter. The Applicants agree that the figure for Dogger Bank South (DBS) East and DBS West together should have been stated as 61,786,350m² in Table 5-3. It should be noted that the figures* • *detailed in Table 9-1 of **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] add up to this 61,786,350m² figure, so the worst case scenario for disturbance of the seabed has been assessed.* • *The difference between the footprints between DBS East and West separately and together is due to different infrastructure being required for the different scenarios. For example, due to the potential requirement for the Offshore Convertor Platforms to connect to each other between DBS East and DBS West (should the Projects be built concurrently / sequentially), an increased length of Inter-Platform Cables would be required over and above the length of Inter-Platform Cabling assumed for DBS East / DBS West in-isolation (342km of Inter-Platform Cables for DBS East / DBS*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			West together as opposed to 115km for DBS East and 129km for DBS West in isolation). The Applicants can provide further explanation for any other parameters identified that do not clearly add together for the Projects combined'. Deadline 2 The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment. Additionally, The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-063:3). See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 2. Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C1). The Applicants maintain their position regarding the updating of the **Environmental Statement (ES) and Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA)** as stated in **Table 3-3** of this document, Point B1 at Deadline 2. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] at Deadline 7, the Applicants consider this matter to be closed out. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact' prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] for Deadline 9.	
C2	It is suggested that cable protection may be used at the landfall exits, however there is a commitment to not use cable protection in the intertidal area and/or for 350m seaward of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS). This also contradicts cable landfall activities set out in the Project Description and MCZ Stage 1 assessment that only describe cables being buried and exit pits naturally backfilling. We advise that clarity is provided on the use of cable protection at the Horizontal Direction Drilling (HDD) exit pits. (7.05)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 Issue progressed. With the removal of the intertidal exit pits, rock protection will no longer be required in the intertidal area. However, it is not clear from the information provided in [AS-141] whether rock protection will be required at the subtidal exit pits and whether this has been accounted for in the (MDS). See Appendix C3 of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission for further detail.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C9). Deadline 6 The Applicants confirm that the subtidal exit pits would not be located within 350m seaward of mean low water springs. This commitment has been added to an update of the Cable Statement submitted at Deadline 6. Deadline 7 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 4 No change – no new information relevant to the issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 The Applicant has stated [REP4-088] that the "intention is to bury the cables at landfall punchout" and that if this is "not possible then protection could be used" which is accounted for within the existing worst case scenario. We advise that clarification is provided on whether the exit pits could fall within 350m seaward of MLWS where there is a commitment to not use cable protection. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicant has confirmed [REP6-052] that the subtidal exit pits would not be located within 350m seaward of mean low water springs. This commitment has been added the updated Cable Statement [REP6-044]. Natural England is satisfied that the exit pits will not fall within 350m seaward of MLWS where there is a commitment to not use cable protection. However, see Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B23) for our outstanding concerns on nearshore cable protection.		
C3	Justification is required for the WCS quantification of cable protection within and outside of Dogger Bank SAC. This should cover: - Previous experience and available information about the ground type within the Array area and along the ECC route. -Possible post-construction measures e.g. placement of additional scour replenishment during the operational phase - Implications from the removal and replacement of scour protection during cable repairs especially	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 No change. No further information or rationale has been provided, and in [AS-141] there is no change to	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C11): '*Please see response to RR-039: C1 above'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: C3). See the response provided for Point B3 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 4. Deadline 5 See the Applicants' response provided at Deadline 5 in **Table 3-3,** Point B6.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	where a new cable loop is included - Implications from the changes in scour prevention/cable protection elevation above the seabed to ensure it remains within the parameters assessed. (7.05)	the 10% cable protection requirement for the array and inter-platform cables. Deadline 4 No change - we maintain our advice that further information and rationale is provided for the WCS for cable protection within and outside of DB SAC, however the Applicant has confirmed that no further revisions will be made to the CBRA within Examination timeframes [REP3-028]. We therefore advise that it would be helpful if the Applicant could provide indicative locations for remedial cable protection requirements based on currently available information Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No Change - Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to public interest tests. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. We note that within The ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft DCO [PD-028], the ExA has recommended the following addition re pre-construction surveys "*.....where cable protection is proposed within habitats of principal importance, Annex 1 subtidal habitat, habitat with suitability for sandeel or superficial deposits of glacial till, a survey report must be submitted to the MMO following completion of the relevant survey to justify with evidence the need for the proposed locations and extent of any cable protection in those locations, demonstrating how the extent of cable protection has been kept to a minimum for each*". While this doesn't fully address the issues we have raised; Natural	Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as detailed in Point A15 of **Table 3-2**, and that provided in **The Applicants' Comments on the ExA's Proposed Schedule of Changes to the dDCO** [REP7-130] (specifically comments on Schedule 10 DML1 - Part 2, 20(4)(a), Schedule 11 DML2 - Part 2, 20(4)(a), Schedule 12 DML3 - Part 2, 18(4)(a), Schedule 13 DML4 - Part 2, 18(4)(a) and Schedule 14 DML5 - Part 2, 14(4)(a)), repeated below: *The Applicants highlight that in the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1] they have already committed to providing the details of exclusion zones or micro-siting requirements for any habitats of principal importance, Annex I subtidal habitat or surficial deposits of glacial till through conditions such as condition 15(1)(v) in Schedule 10 DML1 - Part 2, 20(4)(a). Further, the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] contains provisions for the minimisation of the use of cable protection. The Applicants note that their assessments have assumed that the full footprint of development in the array areas has been assumed to be suitable for sandeel and no significant impacts have been identified. As a result of the above, the Applicants believe that the Draft DCO as presently drafted, and the controls it contains, already provides sufficient protections, where they are justified, in relation to the receptors of the impacts of cable protection identified by the ExA.* *The Applicants do not propose to include the suggested wording in the Draft DCO due to its impractical nature. The Applicants note that habitats of principal importance, Annex 1 subtidal habitat, habitat with suitability for sandeel or superficial deposits of glacial till co-occur across the Offshore Development Area and also occur in close proximity to one another. As a result, in many cases it will not be possible to avoid cable protection on one receptor, without impacting another, adjacent receptor that the restriction is seeking to avoid, potentially to a greater degree. This becomes clear, by way of an example, when it is considered that all of the array areas lie within the Annex I sandbank habitat where areas of high sandeel potential also occur. It is unclear, in this example, how one might strike a balance between avoidance of potential sandeel habitat when so doing might involve greater levels of cabling construction activity and the deposit of cable protection in areas of Annex I habitat which might also support habitats of principle importance. As drafted, there is no way to prioritise these trade offs and there is a high risk that reaching agreement in relation to these issues would be highly time consuming, and potentially impossible.* It is expected that discussions relating to these matters will continue post-consent as the Final Cable Statement(s) and CBRAs are prepared.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		England welcomes this addition to inform further requirements for cable protection.		
C4	Clarity is needed on how the potential for the addition of further cable/scour protection during the operational phase has been considered and included within the worst case calculations for cable/scour protection. It is unclear whether figures provided in the Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOMP; APP-248) for replacement cable protection for the export cables have been integrated into the Project Description. Estimates for cable protection replacement requirements for the inter-array and inter-platform cables have also not been provided. We advise that the standard for quantities of additional scour and/or cable protection outside of benthic SACs is for the replenishment of 10% of any scour prevention/cable protection laid during installation within a 10-year period, as long as the overall footprint is not increased. Any additional scour prevention/cable protection during the operational phase within a designated site will require a separate Marine Licence. See C13 below. (7.05, 8.24)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 and C2.2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. It is outlined in the Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents [REP3-028] that their position remains unchanged, whereby replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DCO could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 No change. We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding additional and replenishment of cable / scour protection and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at D6. Deadline 6	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C12): *'Any replacement cable protection measures would not be additive to the worst case area detailed in Table 5-4 of **Chapter 5 Project Description** [APP-071] and would represent a replacement of the existing export cable protection. Any potential replacement of array or Inter-Platform Cable protection measures would also not be additive to the worst case area detailed in Table 5-4.* *Please see response to RR-039: C13 for further information'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C4). See the response provided for Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document, at Deadline 3. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point C3, above. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as detailed in Point A15 of **Table 3-2.**	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 response in relation to public interest tests. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.		
C5	We are concerned that Table 2-3 of the OOMP indicates that the Applicants considers the lifetime footprints presented in the Project Description to be allowances for cable protection to be installed at any point through the lifetime of the Projects, rather than the amount that will be required for the construction phase alone, which will subsequently have a footprint and impact for the lifetime of the project. We advise that the maximum design parameters for the ECC and array area, including the lifetime footprint, should be revised to only include cable/scour protection anticipated to be installed during construction. The OOMP should also be updated to reflect the licensing requirements for additional protection installed within Dogger Bank SAC during operation. (7.05, 8.25)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 and C2.2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. It is outlined in the Applicants' Reponses to Deadline 2 Documents [REP3-028] that their position remains unchanged, whereby replenishment of cable and scour protection up to the limits set out within the DCO could be deposited within the footprints of deposition established at the construction stage. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 No change. We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding additional and replenishment of cable / scour protection and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C13): *'The maximum design parameters reflect the levels of scour and cable protection that could be required for the Projects during construction and / or operation. As such they represent the maximum proposed levels for installation during construction and no revisions are proposed to the levels presented within the worst case scenarios as a result.* *The Applicants confirm that **Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOMP)** [APP-248] will be updated to reflect the position that new marine licence(s) would be sought for the Projects to allow the deposit of cable and / or scour protection in areas not previously protected during construction throughout the operation phases. It is envisaged that these applications would cover 10 year periods post-construction. For clarity, it is intended that no new marine licences will be sought for any replenishment protection required during the operational phase in areas that were protected as part of construction.* *The Applicants are of the opinion that a distinction should not be drawn in protection maintenance licencing terms between areas within or beyond any Marine Protected Areas as long as any future protection levels fall below the worst case scenario levels assessed within the Environmental Statement and the RIAA. The effects of this protection will be compensated for as part of the DBS benthic SAC compensation proposals. The effects of such protection will have been comprehensively assessed as a permanent effect compensated for through the DBS DCO consenting process. Further assessment and compensation discussions would be neither proportionate nor necessary.* *If additional cable protection for maintenance purposes was required beyond the maximum limits established in the DMLs, then a separate marine licence or licences would be required'.* Deadline 3 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'The maximum design parameters reflect the levels of scour and cable protection that could be required for the Projects during construction and / or operation. As such they represent the maximum proposed levels for installation during construction and no revisions are proposed to the levels presented within the worst case scenarios as a result.'* In addition see response provided in A15 of **Table 3-2** at Deadline 3. Deadline 6	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at D6. Deadline 6 Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 response in relation to public interest tests. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point C3 of this table. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as detailed in Point A15 of **Table 3-2.**	
C6	There are contradictions with regard to the inclusion of cofferdams in the Project scope, including the dimensions provided. It is also stated that the Project has committed to not using cofferdams within the exit pits. Clarification is required on the WCS for the landfall works in relation to cofferdam usage - any documents and assessments should be updated accordingly. (7.09)	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. The Applicants have confirmed that no cofferdams would be used in the Projects' Landfall Zone and that the inclusion of cofferdams within Table 9-1 was an error. The relevant ES chapters and documents should be updated to reflect this. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No change. We maintain that relevant application documents should be updated to reflect the changes in [AS-141]. Deadline 4 No change - updates to ES documents are required to resolve. We will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C14): '*The Applicants can confirm no cofferdams would be used in the within the Projects' Landfall Zone. The inclusion of cofferdams within Table 9-1 was an error.* *The Applicants are in process of preparing a change request relating to a number of design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request will be supported by the **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES and RIAA. This information will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of the change request in early January. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts.* *The change proposed of relevance to this comment is the removal of the requirement for short trenchless cable installation at landfall. Should this change request be accepted, no works within the intertidal area would occur for the Projects.* *Notwithstanding the above, the Applicants can confirm cofferdams are no longer within the Projects' Design Envelope, regardless of whether the change request is accepted*'. Deadline 2 The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment. Additionally, The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-063:3). See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 2. Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding the updating of the Environmental Statement (ES) and Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) as stated in the response to item REP1-063:3 in	

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			The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents [REP2-058] and repeated at Deadline 2 in B1 (**Table 3-3**). End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact' prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] for Deadline 9.	
C7	The Applicants have not sufficiently characterised benthic receptors within Flamborough Head SAC. All benthic receptors within the ZoI, particularly those within designated sites, need to be sufficiently characterised to enable a robust, evidenced assessment to be undertaken and presented. In the absence of characterisation of benthic receptors at a suitable resolution, the WCS needs to be presented (e.g. most sensitive biotope within the broadscale habitat used as a basis for assessments) to consider the sensitivity or recoverability of the benthic receptors to the identified pressure pathways. (7.09, 6.1)	Deadline 1 No change. The Applicants have provided 10.38 Benthic Ecology Technical Note [AS-104] in response to this issue. We will provide our comments on this document at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for comments on 10.38 Benthic Ecology Technical Note [AS-104]. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. Natural England welcome the further characterisation of benthic receptors at a suitable resolution and more transparent consideration of the sensitivity and recoverability of designated benthic receptors to the identified pressure pathways within the ZoI [REP3-026]. We consider this aspect of the issue to be resolved. Updates to ES documents are required to fully resolve the issue, we will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. This has been updated in the Applicant's RIAA [REP4-015], but should also be included within an updated ES chapter.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C15): *'Please see response to RR-039: C5'.* Deadline 3 See the Applicants' response to this matter at Deadline 3 in B40 (**Table 3-3**). The Applicants have updated the **Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP3-025] which has been submitted at Deadline 3 to include the additional detail for the biotopes and species that comprise the qualifying features of the Holderness Offshore and Inshore Marine Conservation Zones and the Flamborough Head Special Area of Conservation. Deadline 6 The Applicants confirm that the updates presented in the **Benthic Ecology Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP3-025] will be incorporated into the ES at Deadline 7. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact' prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] for Deadline 9.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
C8	The cumulation of benthic 'ecological halo effect' following the placement of structures on the seabed has not been considered. A robust assessment is needed of the potential Worst case area of impact on benthic communities within Dogger Bank SAC sandbank feature, and the nature and scale of that impact, as a result of changes to physical and biological processes following the placement of structures and cable/scour protection on the seabed. Once assessments have been updated, monitoring should be secured via the In principal monitoring plan to determine whether the residual impacts are as predicted. (7.09)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - Natural England maintain our advice provided at Relevant Reps. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change - Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Appendix C4 for further details. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Appendix C5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further details. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. The Applicant has presented an assessment of ecological halo effects [REP5-041]. However, we consider that the estimate for worst case area of loss needs further revision. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further details. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C18): *'Please see the response to RR-039: C6'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028], see REP2-065:1.1 - REP2-065:1.4. REP2-065:1.2 – *'Colonisation-related impacts are covered within **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] in section 9.6.3.5 Impact 7 - Colonisation of Introduced Substrate, Including Invasive / Non native Species. The worst case is covered in Table 9-1 and this cross-references Impact 5 – Permanent habitat loss (which equates to 'physical change to another habitat type' in Natural England's response) and this provides the footprint which includes the worst case for scour protection for wind turbines, platforms and unburied cables.* *This is mirrored in the assessment presented in the **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051] under 6.4.2.6.1 Physical change (to another seabed / sediment type) with the worst case presented in Table 6-3.* *The potential impact relates to two pathways for impact – firstly, loss of habitat through physical displacement (i.e. Covering the existing sandbank) and secondly loss of habitat by organic enrichment of surrounding sediments changing the sediments in such a gross manner that they no longer qualify as Annex 1 sandbank.* ***Loss of habitat through physical change*** *This is considered in the worst case assumptions. Table 9-1 (**Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085]) and Table 6-3 (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS- 051]) assess habitat lost as the worst case of turbine + scour protection and worst case of unburied protected cable. Updates to these figures are provided in **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and comprise 1.9km2 of the Dogger Bank SAC.* *For wind turbines we have assumed an 11m monopile with 63m diameter scour protection (i.e. this extends outwards up to 26m from the base of the turbine). This equates to a footprint of 3,117m2 per turbine.* *For cable crossings within the Dogger Bank, maximum parameters for cable protection are for 15.2m and 6m width (for export and inter-array cables respectively) for a length of 400m at any one location. Any hard substrate associated with cable protection would therefore be confined to small patches.* *Within the assessment there is already an assumption of 100% physical change (i.e. permanent habitat loss) within these footprints. If this scour and cable protection is subsequently colonised there is no further loss of habitat – this footprint was already lost. If scour protection or cable protection is not required*	

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			(either in fewer locations, a lower percentage of cables or less scour protection is required at turbines) then the footprint for physical change will be below the worst case. ***Loss of habitat by organic enrichment of surrounding sediments*** *There is potential for fouling communities to develop on turbine towers, scour protection and cable protection. Organic material will be lost through mortality or effects of currents / storm action meaning that organic matter may be dispersed from the turbine towers, scour protection and cable protection. There may also be inputs from faeces of sessile species such as mussels.* *In the case of turbine towers, material being shed will act as per sediment particles assessed elsewhere in the assessment (e.g. Impact 2 – Increased Suspended Sediment Concentrations) thus it is expected that the heavier material (e.g. aggregations of mussels) will settle rapidly to the seabed, in close proximity of the turbine tower. At Thanet, heavier material was deposited within 10 – 15m of the foundation (Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd, 201811). It is likely that for the Projects heavier material would therefore be deposited on the scour protection (or within the area assessed for habitat loss if no scour protection is deployed). This is supported by evidence from Block Island Wind Farm (Hutchison et al, 202012) where operational monitoring shows greatest benthic changes have occurred on or within the footprints of the foundations (four years post installation). This footprint is already accounted for within the footprint for physical change (Table 9-1 of **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085]) and Table 6-3 (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051]).* *Smaller detritus may stay in suspension within the water column for a longer period of time and become advected by tidal currents. Therefore, not all material that is shed from the turbines towers would be deposited in the immediate vicinity.* *It is likely that there will be some input of organic material from the turbines, cable and scour protection to the sediments surrounding them. This could potentially lead to changes in the ecology of those sediments.* *As noted in our response (**Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [As-048]) to Natural England's original comments in RR-039, the evidence is equivocal at best for whether any significant effect is detectable, and effects seem highly variable and dependent on the type of structure and location, seabed-type and hydrographic conditions. The following cases come from a review of available literature from comparable locations.* *Lefaible et al (2019)[13] report different results between jacket and monopile foundations at operational windfarms in Belgium. The Thornton Bank and Bligh Bank locations are environments that are subject to strong physical disturbance where the seafloor typically consists of well-sorted, medium-coarse and mobile sediments with relatively "poor" communities (Lefaible et al, 2019[13]), and so are comparable to the Dogger Bank. In two consecutive years of monitoring (Lefaible et al, 2019[13]), higher fine sand fractions were observed <50m around the jacket foundations and organic enrichment was also observed around the jackets in Year 1, but not in Year 2. In contrast, an opposite trend of lower average organic matter content was observed at very close distances around the monopiles. Higher densities and diversity of the benthos in close vicinity of the turbines was reported, which was most pronounced around the jackets, with differences at the monopiles not statistically significant.*	

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			Evidence from Block Island Wind Farm (HDR, 2020[12]) (which included a comprehensive series of diver, grab and video sampling) generally showed no strong gradients of change in sediment grain size, enrichment, or benthic macrofauna in monitoring conducted 4 years after construction in most study locations. The seabed was described as a coarse sediment environment with medium to very coarse sands dominating, with some fines, so is comparable to the Dogger Bank. Notably, the largest changes in communities beyond the footprint of the turbine were seen in the lowest energy study location, which also showed least post-construction recovery. *Moray East has a range of sandy and coarse sediment biotopes (Moray Offshore Wind Farm (East) Limited, 2024[14]). In post construction monitoring at Moray East (undertaken 2 – 3 years post installation) (Moray Offshore Wind Farm (East) Limited, 2024[14]) no gross changes in benthic habitat types were observed between pre- and post-construction occasions. Significant broadscale habitat alteration was not detected, no evidence of seabed organic enrichment was recorded and no accumulation of biomass from fouling communities was observed (Moray Offshore Wind Farm (East) Limited, 2024[14]). It is noted that survey techniques were acoustic or visual and no grab sampling was undertaken.* *Whilst there is evidence of 'change' in some of the literature, from the comparable situations to Dogger Bank (e.g. Lefaible et al, 2019) the most gross change was from a community typical of well-sorted, medium-coarse and mobile sediment to one with fine to medium sandy sediment. If this example were repeated at Dogger Bank, this would represent a change from one Annex 1 sandbank biotope to another Annex 1 sandbank biotope.* ***It would not represent a loss of Annex 1 habitat****. Figure 9-4 of* ***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology - Figure 9-1 to Figure 9-6*** *[APP-086] shows how the different habitats identified within site specific survey for the Projects are found across the Array Areas with coarse sediment identified next to fines.* *In addition, it is important to remember that sediment biotopes are a useful* ***statistical construct*** *whereby the similarity between the content of individual small sediment grab samples (approx. 0.1m²) often collected at relatively wide spacing (up to 10's of kilometres) is calculated in terms of the number and abundance of infaunal species present and sediment grain size. The degree of similarity between such samples is a judgement and varies with scale. Often samples collected at the same location and time will display significant variation in number and abundance of species. When the distribution and extent of biotopes are mapped, it is necessary to interpolate between individual sample points using additional environmental information such as water depth, broad sediment type and various statistical techniques. When broader scale Annex I habitat types are mapped, such areas can incorporate considerable variation in biological communities present in time and space depending on many factors such as localised variations in sediment type, slope, organic matter content, availability of small scale hard substrates (e.g. pebbles, shells) for attachment and disturbance, larval settlement and recruitment. Such localised variation in small scale community types is characteristic of heterogeneous habitats in naturally disturbed environmental conditions, rather than a physical change to another habitat type at Annex I habitat level. Any change that is potentially occurring as a result of the wind farm therefore needs to be considered in light of the fundamental variability between communities even if assigned to the same biotope.* *Finally, it should be noted that construction and operation of the Projects will be taking place in a situation where the cessation of fishing via bottom-towed fishing gear has been in place for many years.*	

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			*There is no clear understanding of how the cessation of fishing will affect the communities of the Dogger Bank and what 'recovery' will mean for community composition, the trajectory or speed of any change. As stated in the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051], fisheries impacts were considered to have affected over 70% of the SAC area. A reduction in disturbance (in both scale, intensity and frequency) across the area is likely to lead to significant changes in ecology of the Dogger Bank SAC over time from the current baseline conditions, although it is likely in the medium term that these would not mean a change from Annex 1 sandbank (although historically (i.e. prior to industrial fishing) areas of the Dogger Bank included oyster reefs (which would qualify as Annex 1 reef (ABPMer, 2021[15]).* ***Summary*** *The Applicants have assumed 100% habitat loss (totalling up to 1.9km2 for the Projects) due to placement of monopile foundations, cable and scour protection, sediment habitat will be lost up to this extent (by a change to hard substrate) if the worst case is realised. Alternatively, the assessment has already accounted for habitat loss up to this total if less scour protection is required, jackets are deployed etc.* *In terms of the changes to sediments beyond the footprint of infrastructure, the Applicants consider that it is unlikely that such gross changes would occur that these would lead to a loss or change of Annex 1 feature. Such changes should be a focus of the benthic monitoring programme, but do not warrant the increase of the footprint of habitat loss in the assessment.* *The Applicants consider that the current assessment is robust, and will add the above narrative to the updated version of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051] to be submitted at Deadline 4.'* <u>Deadline 7</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: C8): *'The Applicants and Natural England do not agree on the significance of any potential 'ecological halo effect' (see REP6-073: C6 and REP6-073: C11 for full details).* *Nonetheless, to allow decision making by the Secretary of State (SoS) the Applicants have provided updated estimates of the halo effect footprint on a without prejudice basis based on Natural England's comments in the **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Appendix E- Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)** [document reference 15.7] submitted at Deadline 7.'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants maintain the position as outlined at Deadline 7. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP-017] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

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C9	It is unclear how the 'value' of receptors has been consistently incorporated into the assessment process. The Applicants have considered all biotopes within the red line boundary, with the exception of those characterised by piddocks, to be of low value. This includes biotopes representative of Annex 1 habitat within Dogger Bank SAC, and no consideration has been given to biotopes within Flamborough Head SAC. We advise that the methods and rationale for valuing benthic receptors, and how value has been used within the assessment process, is reviewed and documents updated accordingly. The significance of impacts on all benthic receptors should thereafter be reassessed. (7.09)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. We continue to advise that an appropriate value should be attributed to biotopes/habitats which contribute to Annex I features, and subsequently more appropriately used to inform the magnitude of impacts. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. We refer you to ExQ HRA 1.3 response in Deadline 3 Appendix K. Deadline 4 No change - Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. Natural England's concerns on characterisation of benthic receptors for Flamborough Head SAC have been addressed - see Point C7. However, we maintain our previous advice with regards to the valuing of other receptors, particularly those which contribute to Annex I feature and will be subject to permanent loss/change. See Appendix C5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further details. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change - the Applicant maintains their position "that in this case the value of Annex 1 habitat is	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C19): '*Regarding EIA sensitivity, please see the response to RR-039: C7.* *The Annex I habitat features of the Flamborough Head SAC were assessed in section 6.5.2 of the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]. A separate technical note regarding the indirect effects of sediment deposition on the specific biotopes of the Flamborough Head SAC in relation to the ES has been included alongside this response'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in REP2-065:2.1: '*The Applicants reiterate their response to RR-039:C7 in **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representation** [PDA-013] that [emphasis added]:* *'In the EIA (**Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085]) it is explained in section 9.4.3.1.1 that sensitivity is primarily based upon the ecological sensitivity of the receptor to an effect and this is based on the MarESA biotope sensitivities. Whilst value (in this case being part of a designated feature) **may be used as a modifier** to increase sensitivity **this is not automatically done and is subject to expert judgement**. Given the ubiquity of the biotopes within the Dogger Bank across the Southern North Sea, it was not considered that the value element was required to modify the sensitivity. Whether these biotopes are within or outwith a designated site is not relevant in this case. Note that in the case of the piddock feature, higher sensitivity was assigned not only due to ecological sensitivity but also as this is much rarer.* *The value is considered therefore within the HRA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]). The status of the biotopes as part of a designated site is the primary consideration and the key driver in the difference in the conclusions on adverse effect on integrity within the Appropriate Assessment from significance in the EIA.* *The Annex I habitat features of the Flamborough Head SAC were assessed in section 6.5.2 of the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]. A separate technical note regarding the indirect effects of sediment deposition on the specific biotopes of the Flamborough Head SAC in relation to the Environmental Statement (ES) has been included alongside this response.'* *Note that if the Applicants assigned all habitats within SACs as high value and high sensitivity, the significance of effect for the assessment of all impacts would be minor adverse, which is not significant in EIA terms. This is due to the negligible magnitude of impacts which in summary would be localised and short-term.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants reiterate their response. Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-055:C9):	

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		intrinsically considered as part of the HRA process" [REP6-052]. Natural England maintain our previous advice.	'*The Applicants maintain that in this case the value of Annex 1 habitat is intrinsically considered as part of the HRA process. As far as the EIA is concerned boundaries of designated sites are not relevant. If in the EIA, receptors are accorded higher sensitivity based on value and not ecological sensitivity, this strays into the HRA.* *Where value could be used, for example, would be if there was a Habitat or Species of Principal Importance outwith a designated site which would not be otherwise captured within the HRA or MCZA process.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as outlined at Deadline 6 and acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
C10	We disagree with "*Habitats or species that provide prey items for other species of conservation value"* being considered of low value in the assessment. Of note are spawning/nursery grounds for sandeel and herring, both of which are an important prey resource for Annex I bird species and Annex II marine mammal features of designated sites. Within the wider marine environment impacts to habitats that provide prey availability may be considered as low, however it should be recognised that some areas remain more important than others. The importance of the 'Dogger Bank' area for fish species is well documented. We advise that a generic low value can't be attributed to all areas within the red line boundary. We also advise that impacts to benthic habitats which reduce/remove their ability to support benthic communities which are integral to maintaining populations of Annex I and II designated site features, needs to be fully considered within the ES. (See Sheet E for further comments on indirect effects) (7.09)	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change. We note the Applicants have contested the importance of the Dogger Bank sandbank system for prey availability and foraging species. Natural England disagrees with the justification provided and therefore maintains the advice provided in our Relevant Representation on this issue. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. We refer you to ExQ HRA 1.3 response in Deadline 3 Appendix K. Deadline 4 No change - Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 No change. Please see Appendix E5 of our Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C20): '*The supporting role of benthic habitats for other features is considered within both the ornithology assessment (**Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology** [APP- 103] and **RIAA HRA Part 4 of4** [APP -048]) and marine mammal assessment (**Chapter 11 Marine Mammals** [APP -095] and **RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4** [APP -047]). The impacts are assessed within **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] and then cross-referenced in the relevant assessments for all phases of the Projects (construction, operation and decommissioning). The Applicants consider that the assessment is line with best practice for offshore wind assessments. The Applicants note that Natural England have not referenced RIAA Appendix B Sandeel Habitat Potential in the **Dogger Bank SAC and Southern North Sea SAC** [APP-050] in their review. This document presents an overview of sandeel habitats across the two SACs (based upon modelling of the potential for habitat to be suitable for sandeel) considering impact footprints of the Projects in the context of the SACs and also the wider Southern North Sea across which ornithological and marine mammal features forage.* *Updated sandeel heat mapping using the Reach et al. (2024) methodology is presented within the **Heat Mapping Report** [document reference: 10.43] to be submitted in late November 2024. This is overlaid with impacts ranges for "fish with a swim bladder not used in hearing", to provide further context around the sandeel potential within the region. It should be noted however that this updated sandeel heat mapping does not materially change the original mapping presented in Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology [APP-091] or that used to inform the RIAA Appendix B Sandeel Habitat Potential in the **Dogger Bank SAC and Southern North Sea SAC** [APP-050] report.* *The presence of sandeel (or any other prey species) is not relevant to the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC which was designated on the basis of bathymetry and benthic (invertebrate) communities (JNCC, 201125). Sandeel are not named as 'key and influential species of the [sandbank] feature, although they are discussed in relation to 'Characteristic Communities' in the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACO) for Dogger Bank (JNCC, 2022)26. Sandeel in particular were highlighted by the Applicants in the **RIAA Appendix B Sandeel Habitat Potential in the Dogger Bank SAC and Southern Nort Sea SAC** [APP-050] noting that in the SACO (JNCC, 202226), sandeel are described as being more*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue Progressed. Natural England welcome the Applicant's updates to the Effects on Prey Species Technical note [REP6-050]. We have provided further advice on this impact pathway in response to RIES questions 32, 46, 52,53 in Appendix N7 of our Deadline 7 submission.	*resident than other species and that mapping of potential herring spawning habitat shows the Dogger Bank SAC as being of limited suitability (see Figure 2-1 of* ***Heat Mapping Report*** *[document reference: 10.43].* *Impacts upon prey for ornithology receptors are considered in the Plan Level HRA (RIAA Appendix H – Ornithology Array Assessment Part 2, The Crown Estate, 202238) under the following pressures P1 Habitat Loss / Gain, P2 Direct Physical Damage and P3 Indirect Physical Damage. In all cases the HRA concludes that "All seabird species screened in forage widely within the marine environment and the predicted area of habitat damaged represents a very small proportion of the foraging habitat available. Any impact is, therefore, considered to be negligible and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact."* *Impacts upon prey for marine mammal receptors are considered in the Plan Level HRA (RIAA Appendix I Marine Mammal Array Assessment Part 235) under the following pressures P1 Habitat Loss / Gain, P2 Direct Physical Damage and P3 Indirect Physical Damage. The HRA concludes that (Applicants emphasis):* *The effect of this habitat loss will be to reduce the area available for foraging and also the extent of habitat for species which form prey. However, all marine mammal species forage widely within the marine environment and the predicted loss of habitat represents a very small proportion of the foraging habitat available. Any impact on marine mammal features is, therefore, considered to be negligible at any meaningful population scale and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact.* *Damage to physical habitats could affect prey species, or benthic communities upon which these are dependent. However, all marine mammal species forage widely within the marine environment and the predicted loss of habitat represents a very small proportion of the foraging habitat available. Any impact on marine mammal features is, therefore, considered to be negligible at any meaningful population scale and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact.* *The Habitats Assessment (Appendix J) notes that indirect physical damage cannot be quantified at present but some effects are expected. Based on evidence presented in Appendix J which suggests that such effects will be relatively localised and generally accounted for within areas attributed to habitat loss it is considered that the scale of effects will not be significant in the context of possible impacts upon supporting habitats for marine mammals. Any impact on marine mammal features is, therefore, considered to be negligible at an meaningful population scale and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact.* *Although the overall effect of habitat loss will be to reduce the area available for foraging and the extent of habitat for prey species, habitat loss effects will be negligible given the small proportion of habitat occupied by the structures compared to the large foraging ranges of the protected features, as indicated by the distances used in relation to screening. Similarly, although offshore wind structures may provide new foraging opportunities for some species (e.g. Clausen et al., 202127; Russel et al., 201428) habitat gain effects are expected to be negligible in the context foraging ranges'.* Deadline 3	

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			The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in REP2-065:2.1: *'Note that if the Applicants assigned prey species in the EIA as high value and high sensitivity, the significance of effect for the assessment of all impacts would be minor adverse, which is not significant in EIA terms. This is due to the negligible magnitude of impacts (e.g. 0.018% of the medium to high potential habitat for sandeel of the SAC for habitat loss and 0.23% of the medium to high potential habitat for sandeel of the SAC for disturbance). There would be no change to the assessment conclusions if the sensitivity was increased.* *The Applicants reiterate that the value of the Dogger Bank as an Annex 1 feature is considered within the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051] whilst the value the biotopes found there-upon are considered in the ES.* *The Applicants do not contest that the Dogger Bank is a foraging area for mobile species, but seek to highlight that it is not the only foraging area for these species. Therefore, when considering effects on foraging for mobile species the SAC boundary is less relevant and foraging should be seen in the wider regional context of prey available to the wide ranging predators of interest to Natural England – all of whom have foraging ranges of many, many thousands of km2 across areas many times the size of the proposed Offshore Development Area, hence the approach taken. In terms of the EIA, the SAC boundary is used as a geographic reference only based on the pre-application advice of NE that there should be a clear separation between EIA and HRA assessment.* *The supporting role of benthic habitats and fish and shellfish for other features is considered within both the ornithology assessment (**Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology (Revision 2)** [AS-057] and **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 3)** [AS-085]) and marine mammal assessment (**Chapter 11 Marine Mammals** [APP-095] and **RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4** [APP-047]). The impacts are assessed within **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] and **Chapter 10 - Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]) and then cross-referenced in the relevant assessments for ornithology and marine mammals for all phases of the Projects (construction, operation and decommissioning). The Applicants therefore consider that the assessment is line with best practice for offshore wind assessments.'* Deadline 4: The Applicants direct Natural England to their response on this matter in REP3-057: HRA.1.3 of **The Applicants' Comments on the Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027]. *'1) and 2) The Applicants do not contest that the Dogger Bank is an important foraging area for mobile species but seek to highlight that it is not the only foraging area for these species. This is clearly shown by the mapping within the Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel [AS-105]. Note that whilst the Langton et al. (2021) mapping presented by Natural England in Figure 1 in [REP3-057] is suitable for assessing the likelihood of sandeel presence the heat map method presented in Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel [AS-105] is currently used as best practice by the MMO in all English waters. The Applicants consider that the heat mapping should be the default consideration for the Projects.*	

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			When considering effects on foraging for mobile species, the SAC boundary is less relevant, and foraging should be seen in the wider regional context of prey available to the wide-ranging predators of interest to Natural England. All of these species have foraging ranges of many, many thousands of km2 across areas many times the size of the proposed Offshore Development Area, hence the approach taken by the Applicants. In addition, Figure 2 in Natural England's response [REP3-057] shows the distribution of kittiwake from FFC SPA and 'hotspots' across the Southern North Sea not just at Dogger Bank. *It remains the case that the footprint of the Projects within the Dogger Bank SAC represents:* • *0.23% of the medium to high potential habitat for sandeel of the SAC with regard to disturbance; and* • *0.018% of the medium to high potential habitat for sandeel of the SAC with regard to permanent habitat loss.* *Even if these areas were assigned higher sensitivity or value (in EIA terms) given the negligible extent of the area affected this results in non-significant effects (if considering solely on the basis of the SAC boundary, and more so if considering the regional resource).'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants maintain that the information presented in the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] and **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049] ensures this matter has been fully considered within the ES and that sufficient evidence has been provided to Natural England to close this matter. The Applicants highlight that the assessment of effects on prey was undertaken in line with best practice as per consented offshore wind farms. The assessment rational and results are set out in the **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049]. The Applicants acknowledge Natural England disagree on this matter at the end of Examination.	
C11	Loss of benthic habitat as a result of UXO clearance, particularly within Dogger Bank SAC, should be added to the worst case calculation for the EIA and RIAA, whether it be temporary or otherwise. We advise that the Applicants also needs to evidence their claim that *"craters would be expected to re-fill with sediment over the course of days"* (applies to both UXO detonations and jack-up operations). If depressions are created from UXO clearance or jack-up operations in areas of coarse or mixed sediments, the area may need to be considered as permanent habitat change/loss unless it can be otherwise evidenced that they will backfill with similar sediment types. We consider that recovery is altogether unlikely within the irreplaceable NERC Section 41 habitats	<u>Deadline 1</u> No change. The Applicants have provided a Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage [AS-025] in response to this issue. We will provide our comments on this document at Deadline 2. <u>Deadline 2</u> No change. See Appendix C2.1 and Section 3 of Appendix F2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. <u>Deadline 3</u> No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C21): *'See RR-039: C3 with regard to pre-construction survey and micro-siting commitments for the piddock habitat.* *The **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [AS-025], submitted to The Planning Inspectorate on the 7th November 2024, notes that Dogger Bank B undertook monitoring of craters caused by high-order Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance in 2023 (Dogger Bank B, 2023). The UXO clearance campaign was completed in February-March 2023, with a survey of the craters in June 2023 at five of six clearance locations. This survey showed that in all cases the craters had infilled rapidly, in some cases infilling was largely complete, and even where there was the least recovery in (DBB_027) a 0.8m crater infilled to approximately 0.4m depth.* *Any potential effects on the Dogger Bank SAC resulting from UXO detonation would be subject to a separate marine licence that would be applied for post-consent'.* <u>Deadline 3</u>	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	which have been identified within the red line boundary (i.e. Piddocks with a sparse associated fauna in sublittoral very soft chalk or clay). (7.09, 6.1, 7.05)	Deadline 4 No change. Natural England welcomes the additional information provided by the Applicant in Appendix 1 of [REP3-022] however, the pathways of effect which have been considered do not address impacts from the creation of depressions from UXO clearance or jack-up operations in areas of coarse or mixed sediments. We continue to advise that impacts from the creation of depressions from UXO clearance or jack-up operations in areas of coarse or mixed sediments should be considered as permanent habitat change/loss (rather than temporary disturbance/damage) unless it can be otherwise evidenced that they will backfill with similar sediment types. Evidence from similar sediment types at Triton Knoll and Lincs OWFs are demonstrating that JUV leg depressions remain 2-10 years after installation. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Appendix C5 for further details. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. We understand that the Applicant will update the RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4) [REP4-014] at Deadline 7 on a without prejudice basis to include depressions from UXO clearance and jack-up operations as permanent habitat loss. Please also see Natural England's response to RIES Q12 and 18 in Appendix N of our Deadline 7 submission.	The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in REP2-069:C11: *'In terms of UXO clearance this would be subject to a separate ML application. Appendix B - Dogger Bank B UXO crater survey results of **Review of evidence on recovery of sandbank habitat following habitat damage** [AS-025] provides the results from several high-order clearances. These show a maximum crater diameter of around 5m. – therefore a crater would be around 20m2, and 100 such clearances would equate to 2,000m2. This equates to approximately 0.007% of the assessed total area of disturbance from construction from the Projects within the SAC. The Applicants do not consider that this represents a material consideration in the assessment given the estimation already required for cumulative / in-combination projects in relation to disturbance.* *In terms of recovery, see the Applicants' response to this matter in the first item of Table 2-7 above.'* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-055:C3). 'The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP5-055:C3 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052],** repeated below for convenience: *The total area assumed for permanent habitat loss = 1,815,352m² (see Table 6-3 of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-014] submitted at Deadline 4).* ***Appendix B - Dogger Bank B Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Crater Survey Results of Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2)** [REP3-021] provides the results from several high-order clearances. These show a maximum crater diameter of around 5m. – therefore a crater would be around 20m². As noted in section 5.5.7.4.3 of **Chapter 5 Project Description (Revision 3)** [REP1-009] however, it is expected that 41 UXO would need to be cleared during the construction phase across the entirety of the Offshore Development Area. Assuming all of these occur within the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC) the total footprint would be 820m², adding 0.05% to the assessed footprint.* *The area of seabed disturbance from jacking-up activities over the Projects lifetime is 306,900m² (see Table 6-3 of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-014] submitted at Deadline 4). This would add 17% to the assessed footprint.* *Therefore, if all of the above is considered permanent habitat loss the total footprint would be **2,123,072m²**.* *The Applicants note that if the Secretary of State (SoS) concludes that habitat disturbance contributes to Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEoI) then the jacking-up footprint would be within the disturbance footprint and therefore already taken into account. Therefore, the footprint of jacking-up should only be added to the permanent habitat loss footprint if a) SoS agrees that this is not a temporary disturbance impact and b) if the SoS agrees with the Applicants that other construction disturbance is temporary and does not contribute to AEoI.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			*In line with the above, the Applicants will update the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-014] at Deadline 7 on a without prejudice basis to include depressions from UXO clearance and jack-up operations as permanent habitat loss.'* Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position as outlined at Deadline 6. End of Examination Position Following submission of the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] at Deadline 7 which included estimates on a without prejudice basis depressions from UXO clearance and jack-up operations as permanent habitat loss, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact' prior to their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] for Deadline 9.	
C12	The Applicants have not committed to using any specific type of cable/scour protection and has not considered the limitations some methods present with regard to successful decommissioning and/or likelihood of degradation over the lifetime of the project, which could have wider impacts in the case of grout bags/bagged solutions. Due consideration should be given to the nature of the cable/scour protection used and should favour those engineering options with the greatest likelihood of successful removal at the Projects' end of life. We advise against the use of rock protection within designated sites and against grout bags, unless filled with locally sourced sediment similar to that within the SAC. (7.05)	Deadline 1 No change. To note: We believe the Applicants' Responses to comment C22 in [AS-048] may be an error and are therefore basing our response on their response to comment C43 (which has been signposted from the response to C44). Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change - The Applicant has indicated that further consideration will not be given to this until post-consent. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 & End of Examination Position	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C22): '*The Applicants note that the presence of piddock habitat within the Dogger Bank is potentially the result of bottom contacting fisheries removing overlaying sediments and exposing substrates suitable for the piddocks. This habitat is not mentioned in the site selection documentation (JNCC, 201125) or the SACO for Dogger Bank (JNCC, 202226). This habitat is not a recognised feature of sandbanks. Recovery of the sandbank feature as a result of the cessation of fisheries within the SAC may well lead to the loss of the piddock habitat'.* Deadline 2: The Applicants have responded to this point in **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C43). See the response provided for Point C12 in **Table 3-4** of this document within the initial comments. Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-065: 7.1). See the response provided for Point B7 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 3. The Applicants will continue to give due consideration to the use of removable cable and scour protection measures during the detailed design stages of the Projects post-consent, with Natural England afforded opportunities to comment on these proposals in relation to the Final Cable Statements and Scour Protection Plans. Should the use of removable cable and scour protection be deemed viable, then the footprint of compensation relative to the footprint of impacts would be further enhanced on decommissioning.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No change. As detailed at Deadline 4, the Applicant has indicated that further consideration will not be given to this until post-consent. We understand this to be their fixed position. Natural England also maintain our previous advice. We therefore do not believe that resolution will occur during examination. Therefore unless there is a change in the Applicant's position, our position will remain unchanged for the remainder of the examination. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to public interest tests	Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as detailed in Point A15 of **Table 3-2.**	
C13	We advise that the Applicants commits to bundling the export cables for each project as mitigation - this would halve the number of trenches needed (from two to one for each array) and reduce cable protection requirements. (7.05)	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. We welcome the Applicants commitment to bundling the export cables in the updated Cable Statement ([AS-079] 8.20 Cable Statement Rev 02). We advise that this commitment is secured in the DCO and/or commitment register and relevant application documents and assessments are revised accordingly. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. We welcome that this has been secured in C188 of the Commitments Register [REP2-026]. However, we continue to advise that this be secured within the DCO/dML. Please see ExQ BE1.1 response within Deadline 3 Appendix K. Deadline 4 No change - Natural England will provide further comments upon review of the Applicant's response to our Deadline 3 submissions. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. Whilst we would welcome this being conditioned within the DCO, we are satisfied with the Applicant's response [REP4-088] and that the updates to the Cable Statement,	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C23): '*Following the receipt of Grid Connection Offers from National Grid Electricity System Operator (now National Energy System Operator) for the Projects the Applicants have selected a 1,450MW symmetrical monopile design. As a result, the Applicants can commit to bundling pairs of the export cables, i.e. only one pair for each Array Area. This commitment will be captured within an update to the* ***Cable Statement*** *[APP-244] which will be submitted in late November 2024'.* Deadline 2: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-067:C13): '*The Applicants acknowledge this comment and note that this commitment is secured by the* ***draft DCO (Revision 5)*** *[REP1-004] at present. See response to REP1-067 B49 for further information. This commitment has also been included in the updated* ***Commitments Register (Revision 2)*** *[document reference: 8.6] submitted at Deadline 2*' Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C13). See the response provided for Point B49 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 3. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter. End of Examination Position The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

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		Commitments Register and RIAA sufficiently secure this commitment.		
C14	The provision of a Cable Statement/Cable Burial risk assessment is not embedded mitigation, as the specific commitments within the final detailed plans will be key in determining the effectiveness of the mitigation. Should further commitments and/or changes to project design be made by the Applicants, the impact assessment should be updated. (7.09, 6.1, 8.18)	Deadline 1 No change. Please see Section 2 of our Deadline 1 cover letter for further detail. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No change. Whilst an updated Cable Burial Risk assessment was presented by the Applicants [REP2-040], no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change - the Applicant has indicated that an updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4. Deadline 5 No change - see Point B49 and B50 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C24): '*The Applicants note Natural England's position regarding the provision of a Cable Statement / Cable Burial Risk Assessment as embedded mitigation. The Cable Statement will continue to be updated throughout the lifetime of the Projects, including any potential additional mitigation agreed by the Applicants. Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the Projects' Design Envelope or stakeholder comments will be captured though submissions to the examination*'. Deadline 3 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C14): '*The Applicants have assessed the worst case and are not of the opinion that any updates to the assessments are necessary or proportionate. Any changes to the project design would be within the envelope established and thus any impacts would be no worse than those predicted at the point of consent. In light of this, the Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided in response to RR-039: C24* (above)'. Deadline 4 The **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-050] was submitted at Deadline 4. End of Examination Position **Chapter 9 - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] was submitted at Deadline 7 which incorporated the latest design changes and commitments made by the Applicants through Examination. As such the Applicants consider these updates to have resolved Natural England's original comment.	
C15	The RIAA will need updating to ensure that all revisions to the assessments are incorporated within it.	Deadline 1 No change. Please see Section 3 of our Deadline 1 cover letter for further detail.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C26): '*The RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) is a point in time document that reflects the position of the Applicants at the time of submission. It will not be updated. Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the Projects' Design Envelope or stakeholder comments will be captured though submissions to the examination.* *With regard to the benthic conclusions, any changes are unlikely to result in changes to the conclusions of the assessment, merely the quantum of impact (e.g. footprint area)*'.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			End of Examination Position Following further comments through Examination from Natural England and the Examining Authority the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was updated at Deadline 4 and Deadline 7 to reflect the latest revisions to the Projects. As such the Applicants consider this matter to be closed.	
C16	We do not agree that an AEoI can be excluded from the disturbance/damage of Annex I sandbanks within the Dogger Bank SAC. Unlike more dynamic sandbanks, the length of time for recovery could be up to 25 years. We highlight that the R4 Plan Level benthic compensation includes the requirement for benthic compensation for disturbance/damage caused to Annex I 'glacial till' Annex I Sandbanks within Dogger Bank SAC. (6.1)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing 10.44 Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage' [AS-025] and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Please see response to ExQ BE 1.7 and 1.8 in Appendix K at Deadline 3. Deadline 4 No change - Natural England and the Applicant maintain their respective positions. It is unlikely that agreement will be reached on this matter. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England notes from the Applicants response to ExQ1 [REP4-087 page 76] that we continue to disagree in relation to this matter. Having thoroughly considered this, we do not believe that resolution will occur during examination. Therefore unless there is a change in the Applicant's position, our position will remain unchanged for the remainder of the examination.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C27): *'The Applicants note that the **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060] states that (paragraph 3.1.4) (noting that although the following is described as recovery from loss the text appears in relation to habitat damage)* *'Recovery from habitat loss would not occur until decommissioning has been completed, and may take 10-25 years (based on Natural England's advice)'* *Natural England were asked by the Applicants during The Crown Estate strategic compensation Steering Group meetings to provide evidence for this position, and none has been provided to date. The advice provided in **Natural England's Relevant Representation** [AS-048], RR-039: Annex C1- In relation to consideration of small-scale habitat loss within Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), does not present any quantitative evidence on either physical or temporal scale of damage effects.* *The Applicants have provided evidence for its case as signposted above and has provided additional evidence (including survey from the constructed Dogger Bank B project) in Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage [document reference: 10.44], which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 7th November 2024.* *In short, the Applicants consider that Natural England's position does not take account of the speed of recovery, which clearly is more rapid than suggested in their advice'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided in **Table 2-10** of this document. Deadline 4 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Comments on the Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027]. REP3-057:BE.1.7 - *'1) and 2) As per the Applicants previous response **The Applicants' Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027], we reiterate that the evidence provided by Natural England is inadequate. The Applicants have summarised the main points below:* • *The evidence is generic – not specific to Dogger Bank SAC.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			• *It does not include any evidence from any offshore industry (other than fisheries or aggregates, which have very different effects in terms of form and frequency) regarding physical disturbance and recovery.* • *Has old references to what are reviews or meta-analyses.* • *It does not include any direct studies of the effect or evidence from offshore wind post-consent monitoring.* • *Does not take into account the evidence presented by Marine Evidence–based Sensitivity Assessment (MarESA) for recovery of the relevant biotopes (which the Applicants have added in full to* ***Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2)*** *[REP3-021].* • *Does not acknowledge site specific evidence of recovery provided by the Applicants in* ***Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2)*** *[REP3-021] or UK Government studies (i.e. Eggleton et al., 2016)[2].* *In summary it does not provide any support for Natural England's contention that recovery will take 10-25 years. The Applicants cannot comment on Natural England's 'evidence for Favourable Condition Status for Annex I Sandbanks' as its contents are unknown.'* REP3-057: BE.1.8 - *'1) The Applicants highlight that should agreement not be reached, the worst case for disturbance effects has been provided in* ***Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works*** *[AS-141] and will be included in the updated version of* ***RIAA HRA – Part 2 of 4 - Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)*** *[AS-051] which will be submitted at Deadline 4. Table 4-3 in* ***Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works*** *[AS-141] updates the worst case presented in the* ***RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)*** *[AS-051]. This information will allow the Secretary of State to determine the footprint contributing to AEoI should they concur with Natural England's advice.* *2) As stated in* ***Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2)*** *[REP3-021] the underlying geology of the Dogger Bank is not relevant to consideration of the habitat 'H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time' – as stated* *"The communities present do not depend on the underlying structure of the bank, but on the nature of the shallow sediment layer in or on which they live. Principle factors determining community composition include an interrelated combination of sediment grain size, water depth, hydrodynamic regime and organic content – as well as interactions between species such as predation. The majority of living organisms are found either on or near the sediment surface or burrowing within the top 5-30cm. In stable fine-grained muddy sediments found in deeper or very sheltered waters burrows of some species may extend to depths of 1-2m from the surface, but such sediment conditions are not found within the Dogger Bank SAC."* *We note that Natural England again states that: "Sandy mound sandbanks such as those at Dogger Bank SAC are unique and have limited recovery ability"*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			*This is not supported by the MarESA assessments (reproduced in full in Appendix A of **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2**) [REP3-021]).* *Natural England state that recovery is based upon a need for 100% of a habitat (across the entire SAC) and its most sensitive components to recover. However, it is worth noting that the MarESA Guidance Manual (Tyler Walters et al., 2023)4 states the following: 'Full recovery' is envisaged as a return to the state of the habitat that existed prior to impact. However, this does not necessarily mean that every component species has returned to its prior condition, abundance or extent but that the relevant functional components are present and the habitat is structurally and functionally recognizable as the initial habitat of interest. The assessments are based on key structural or functional or important characteristic species for each biotope.* *3) The Applicants reiterate that fisheries have had an impact upon the Dogger Bank SAC which is several orders of magnitude greater in scale (in area terms – approximately 70.5% compared to 0.18% (see **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051]) than offshore wind and have been a historic pressure. There is no clear understanding of how the cessation of fishing will affect the communities of the Dogger Bank and what 'recovery' will mean for community composition, the trajectory or speed of any change. As stated in the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3**) [AS-051], fisheries impacts were considered to have affected over 70% of the SAC area. A reduction in disturbance (in both scale, intensity and frequency) across the area is likely to lead to significant changes in ecology of the Dogger Bank SAC over time from the current baseline conditions, although it is likely in the medium term that these would not mean a change from Annex 1 sandbank (although historically (i.e. prior to industrial fishing) areas of the Dogger Bank included oyster reefs (which would qualify as Annex 1 reef). Impacts from offshore wind have to be seen in this context.* *Natural England states that: "the previously consented projects within Dogger Bank SAC, Dogger Bank A, B and C together cover an area larger than Greater London"* *This statistic is promotional copy from those projects' websites and has no relevance to the actual footprint of infrastructure or impact of those projects within the project boundaries. This statement is meaningless in terms of the debate on recovery.* *Natural England state: "The construction process is predicted to take 5-7 years and cumulative disturbance will continue, though to a lesser degree, throughout the operational phase."* *Natural England references to frequency of disturbance do not reflect the reality of construction and operation. Impacts will be localised, episodic and short term during construction, they will not occur across the entire array areas for the duration of construction. Recovery at one location can commence once construction activities have moved on. During operation disturbance of the seabed will be limited to cases where reactive repairs, replacements or remedial work is required.* *4) Recovery timescales are based on a combination of site specific data, industry monitoring, other studies and the MarESA assessments (reproduced in full in Appendix A of **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2**) [REP3-021]).'*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Deadline 6 and End of Examination Position Following a meeting held with Natural England on 8th May 2025, the Applicants agree that an agreement on this matter is unlikely to be reached. The Applicants highlight that the worst case for disturbance effects have been provided in **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and have been included in the updated revision of the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 - Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-014] submitted at Deadline 4. This is also reflected in the updated **Appendix 3 Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan (Revision 3)** [REP4-028] submitted at Deadline 4 which includes the disturbance footprint on a without-prejudice basis. This information will allow the Secretary of State to determine the footprint contributing to Adverse Effect on Integrity should they concur with Natural England's advice.	
C17	Penetration and/or disturbance of the substratum below the surface of the seabed, including abrasion, should be screened in for the Operation and Maintenance phase for Dogger Bank SAC. (6.1)	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. The Applicants have clarified that this impact was screened in. We advise that the relevant Tables (6-4, 6-6) in APP-046 are updated to reflect this. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated an updated RIAA will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-027]. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. Tables 6-4 and 6-6 of the updated (6.1) Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 2 of 4 [REP4-015] have been updated to include this effect.	The Applicants also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C29). Deadline 2 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-063:3). See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 2. Deadline 3 This impact was included within the assessment, see paragraph 31 of **Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 3)** [AS-051]. The Applicants maintain their position regarding the updating of the ES and RIAA as stated in the response to item REP2-069: B1 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] and repeated at Deadline 2 in B1 **Table 3-3**. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	
C18	Full consideration of the likely nature, extent, duration, and significance of impacts upon SPA and SAC supporting habitats is required to inform	Deadline 1 No change.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C30):	

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	a robust assessment of the likely impacts upon designated ornithological and marine mammal features. We consider that this has not been adequately undertaken for sites including Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA and the Southern North Sea SAC. (7.09)	Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Please see response to ExQ HRA 1.3 in Appendix K at Deadline 3. Deadline 4 No change - The Applicant has indicated that a technical note relevant to this issue will be submitted at Deadline 4. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England does not consider that [REP4-093] progresses this issue. See Appendix C5 and E5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change. Please see our response to RIES Q52 in Appendix N7 of our Deadline 7 submission.	*'Please see the response to RR-039: C2'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069: C10). See the response provided for Point C10 in **Table 3-4** of this document, at Deadline 3. Deadline 4: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088) (REP2-069:C18). See the response provided for Point C10 in **Table 3-4** of this document, at Deadline 4. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: C18): ***'Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049] was submitted at Deadline 6 which presented further updates to the Applicants' position on the potential effects on prey species resulting from the Projects. The Applicants maintain that a robust assessment on the potential effects on prey species has been conducted and that Natural England possess sufficient evidence to close out this matter.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as outlined at Deadline 6, and highlight their response to Natural England's comment on Q52 of the RIES repeated below: *The Applicants highlight that the assessment of effects on prey was undertaken in line with best practice as per consented offshore wind farms. The assessment rational and results are set out in the **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049]* *The Applicants acknowledge the PrePARED work but highlight that the report cited states that* *Depletion of fish prey in the North Sea, **caused by climate change and/or fisheries activities**, is a key pressure contributing to poor kittiwake population status. The ecological mechanisms and processes underpinning the interactions between kittiwakes and their fish prey are complex and need to be better understood in order to inform robust, evidence-based ecological measures that would improve the viability of seabird populations of conservation importance.* *This highlights two key points* • *The key pressures on prey resources are not related to offshore wind* • *The ecological mechanisms of predator/prey relationships are complex and not understood at the present time.* *This therefore is a clear example of Natural England raising issues that are poorly understood for which they have no guidance and suggesting that this is a deficiency of the Applicants assessment.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
C19	The worst case suspended sediment concentrations from trenching activities in the ECC are inconsistent between the RIAA and EIA chapters - we advise that the EIA and/or RIAA are updated with accurate worst case prediction values as needed. (6.1, 7.09)	Deadline 1 Issue progressed. Natural England welcome the clarification provided by the Applicants in their response [AS-048] to our Rel Rep [RR-039] (C33), confirming that some of the values presented were incorrect. We will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated an updated RIAA will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-027]. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. We note that Table 6-3 in the updated (6.1) Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 2 of 4 [REP4-015] has been updated. We will provide further comment once further updates are provided at Deadline 7.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C33): '***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology*** *[APP-085] and the* ***RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4*** *[APP-046] differ in terms of the areal coverage. The text in paragraph 177 of the ES covers the full length of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, as opposed to just the area within the Dogger Bank SAC.* *Paragraph 177 of* ***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology*** *[APP-085] refers to the 1,000 -1,500 mg/l range in reference to the potential sediment disturbance range from the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. The Applicants can confirm this is incorrect. This 1,000 - 1,500 mg/l range could occur only within the centre of the DBS East Array Area in the worst case, resulting from Array Cable trenching (see section 8.3.4.5.2 of* ***Marine Physical Processes Modelling Technical Report (Revision 2)*** *[document reference: 7.8.8.3] for further information). For the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, the worst case suspended sediment concentration is up to 750mg/l within the direct footprint of the cable trenching activities. It should be noted that this correction does not alter the assessment conclusions reached in either* ***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology*** *[APP-085] or the* ***RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4*** *[APP-046]'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding the updating of the ES and RIAA as stated in the response to item REP2-069: B1 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] and repeated at Deadline 2 in B1 **Table 3-3**. End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact' prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] for Deadline 9.	
C20	The Applicants have calculated an 'as built' estimate for habitat loss for consented projects within Dogger Bank SAC to inform impacts to extent and distribution. These are not legally secured, thus we advise that consented parameters should be used to inform habitat loss estimates for assessment. (6.1)	Deadline 1 Issue addressed. We welcome the confirmation from the Applicants that the habitat loss estimate based on consented parameters was used in the assessment.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C34).	
C21	Clarification is required on the WCS for sandwave levelling/seabed clearance. We also advise that within benthic MPAs any sediment deposition is located within areas of similar sediment type, as close to and upstream of the original sandwave,	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. However, we note that the Applicants have indicated	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C35): *'Noted. The Applicants have derived worst case scenarios for the Projects which are informed by initial site investigation work undertaken to inform this DCO application. The detailed proposals relating to sandwave levelling and seabed clearance will be developed by the Projects during the post-consent*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	and is deposited using a fall pipe (should a suction hopper dredger be used). An outline sandwave levelling, deposition and recovery plan should be provided as either a standalone document or as part of the Cable Statement [APP-242] /Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment. (6.1, 7.09, 8.18)	that the Cable Statement would be updated to include detail relating to sandwave levelling and deposition. The most current version of this (8.20 Cable Statement, Rev 02, [AS-079]) does not include such update. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. We note there is a potential for this to become a red risk depending on the Applicants' Responses. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. With regards to sediment deposition, the Applicant has stated [REP3-028] that they can commit to depositing like sediment on like sediment (within Dogger Bank SAC) and has indicated that an updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4 [REP3-028] to reflect such changes. We will provide further comment accordingly. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. Natural England welcomes that the Cable Statement [REP4-051] has been updated with a commitment to deposit like sediment on like sediment both within and beyond the boundary of Dogger Bank SAC during sandwave levelling. However, additional commitments to mitigation remain required. See Appendix B5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7	*stages. See response RR-039: B28 in the Applicants' Responses Appendix B Marine Physical Environment (section 2.3) for further information regarding sandwave clearance.* *As a variety of sediment types are present on the Dogger Bank, the Applicants believe that stipulating material to be disposed must be placed on the same material type cannot be guaranteed and would be difficult and onerous to apply in reality. Dredging, particularly for the linear aspects of the Projects such as the subsea cable installations, may occur over a variety of sediment types to allow installation to occur. The resultant mixed cargo could not be disposed of on any single, specific material type. Hence, strict adherence with this request would be difficult to achieve. However, in line with the request made by Natural England the Projects can commit to including detail relating to sandwave levelling and deposition within the **Cable Statement** [APP-242] post-consent. An interim update of this document will be submitted in late November 2024)'.* Deadline 2 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 1 Documents** [REP2-058] (REP1-067:C21): *'The Applicants can confirm that section 1.4.5.4, page 28 of [AS-079] contains updates relating to sandwave levelling, deposition and recovery. Additional detail relating to dredging and disposal can be found in the response to Action Point 12 in Table 4-1, section 4 Responses to ISH2 Hearing Questions – Offshore Topics of The Applicants' Responses to January 2025 Action Points (Revision 2) [AS-155].'* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided for Point B45 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 3. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 to Point B17 of **Table 3-3** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that all reasonable mitigation and monitoring proposals have been committed to by the Applicants with regards to potential sand wave levelling within **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] and the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)** [REP7-035]. With regards to the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it.	

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		No change. See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B17).		
C22	We do not agree with the RIAA assessment that habitat loss impacts in Dogger Bank SAC are "*minimal*". Taking into account the many anthropogenic activities occurring and planned across the Dogger Bank SAC, when all pressures are summed it will lead to an adverse effect on the site integrity, as concluded in the Plan Level HRA. (6.1)	N/A	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C36): '*The Applicants consider that 'minimal' needs to be seen in context, the Applicants consider that the context is the percentage of area within the Dogger Bank SAC (which is approximately 12,000km²) – the disturbance during construction 31.4km² equates to 0.2% of the area of the SAC and, as previously discussed (see RR-039: C21) is a temporary impact, the habitat loss of 2.25km² equates to 0.018% of the area of the SAC.* *Please refer to the **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [AS-025] for a discussion of small-scale losses.* *With regard to habitat loss, the Applicants do not dispute that (given the unfavourable condition of the SAC) any habitat loss, however minimal, would lead to a conclusion of adverse effect on integrity, based on previous decisions (this is the case for Projects alone or in- combination). The Applicants disagree that this conclusion is valid for damage (alone or in- combination) where the scale of the effect and the evidence of recovery must be considered (see **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [APP-025]'.* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the initial position outlined above.	
C23	We do not agree with the worst case calculation of area of loss due to change to another seabed/sediment type for Dogger Bank SAC presented in the RIAA as we are not confident that the calculations are based on realistic worst case calculations (C12, C13, C18, C35). We advise that a robust assessment is provided of the potential Worst case area of impact on benthic communities within Dogger Bank SAC sandbank feature. Consideration should be given to the nature of the impact as a result of changes to physical and biological processes, following the placement of structures and cable/scour protection on the seabed. (6.1) See also C18.	Deadline 1 No change - Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See point C8 for further information. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. See point C8 for further information. Deadline 5 No change. See point C8 for further information. Deadline 6	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C37): '*The Applicants consider that 'minimal' needs to be seen in context, the Applicants consider that the context is the percentage of area within the Dogger Bank SAC (which is approximately 12,000km²) – the disturbance during construction 31.4km² equates to 0.2% of the area of the SAC and, as previously discussed (see RR-039: C21) is a temporary impact, the habitat loss of2.25km² equates to 0.018% of the area of the SAC.* *Please refer to **the Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [APP-025] for a discussion of small-scale losses.* *With regard to habitat loss, The Applicants do not dispute that (given the unfavourable condition of the SAC) any habitat loss, however minimal, would lead to a conclusion of adverse effect on integrity, based on previous decisions (this is the case for Projects alone or in- combination). The Applicants disagree that this conclusion is valid for damage (alone or in- combination) where the scale of the effect and the evidence of recovery must be considered (see **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [APP-025]'.* Deadline 3	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue progressed. The Applicant has presented an assessment of ecological halo effects [REP5-041]. However, we consider that the estimate for worst case area of loss needs further revision. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further details. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided for Point C8 in **Table 3-4** of this document, at Deadline 3. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point C8 of this table. End of Examination Position The Applicants and Natural England do not agree on the significance of any potential 'ecological halo effect' (see REP6-073: C6 and REP6-073: C11 of T**he Applicants Responses to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] for full details). Nonetheless, to allow decision making by the Secretary of State (SoS) the Applicants have provided updated estimates of the halo effect footprint on a without prejudice basis based on Natural England's comments in the **Appendix E- Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)** [document reference 15.7] submitted at Deadline 7. These estimates have been used to provide a without prejudice estimate of habitat loss with a 50m halo effect plus habitat disturbance in Table 6-7 of the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 - Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016]. As such, the Applicants consider that the worst case calculation of area of loss due to change to another seabed/sediment type for Dogger Bank SAC has been presented in **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 - Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016], and that this matter is closed.	
C24	Natural England advise that a tidal ellipse is used to estimate the zone of greatest influence for sediment plumes for the array area and export cable corridor. We note that the Zone of Influence (ZoI) for suspended sediment has been updated to 8km (6.1, Table 6-1) based on site specific physical processes modelling undertaken. It is unclear as to where the 8km ZoI is derived from. The Applicants should provide further clarity on estimated sediment plume sizes including which values have been used to assess for Changes in Suspended Sediment Concentration and Transport due to Cable Installation (Array, Inter Platform and Export) and smothering and siltation for all relevant parts of the Application. (6.1, 7.08)	Deadline 1 No change. We welcome the clarification provided in the Applicants' Responses that the 8km ZoI is incorrect, we will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Please see our Appendix L at Deadline 3. Deadline 4 & End of Position Deadline Issue resolved. We welcome the Applicant's clarification on the Zone of Influence (ZoI) used to	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C39). Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in **Table 2-7,** REP2-065:5.1 – REP2-065:5.3. Deadline 5 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		inform the impact assessment based on numerical modelling as provided in [REP3-026].		
C25	A drill arising footprint has not been provided. The placement of drill arisings adjacent to turbines may result in further habitat loss/change. As mitigation, the Applicants should commit to the placement of drill arisings in areas of similar habitat/particle size. Otherwise, this will need to be assessed similar to that of scour prevention/cable protection as a lasting impact included within the AEoI for Dogger Bank SAC and commitments to remove at the time of decommissioning will be required. (6.1)	Deadline 1 No change - Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. We maintain our previous advice that the placement of drill arisings adjacent to turbines may result in further habitat loss/change. If drill arisings cannot be placed in areas of similar habitat / particle size, further assessment for habitat loss will be required. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. A footprint for drill arisings has been provided in Table 4-3 of [AS-141], however the remainder of this issue is unaddressed. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has stated that drill arisings would be located adjacent to turbine foundations and within the scour protection footprint so would be captured within the existing habitat loss estimates. Natural England require further clarification on how this would be achieved in practice. See Appendix C4 for further detail. Deadline 5 No change. We maintain our previous advice. We note that the Applicant has updated Table 1-3 of the IPMP [REP4-053] stating "Should drilling be utilised to install piled foundations, the Applicants will seek to ensure that no drill mounds (i.e. sediment arising from the drilling of the Projects foundations) persist above 3m from the surrounding seabed. In the event that such drill mounds greater than 3m are found to persist, an appropriate monitoring campaign will be developed in consultation with the MMO". However,	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C41): '*The maximum potential volume of drill arisings across both Projects as assessed in the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046] was 68,160m³ for DBS East and DBS West together, which was included within the total potential volumes of displaced sediment within the Dogger Bank SAC.* *Given the proportion of drill arisings in relation to the overall potential volume of displaced sediment within the Dogger Bank SAC is minimal (representing 0.3% of the 20,361,344m3 assessed within the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]), it is considered proportionate and acceptable to include consideration of drill arisings within the assessment of overall displaced sediment rather than separating drill arisings out into their own assessment.* *As noted in the Clarification Note on Drill Arisings and Deposited Sediments originated by Hornsea Project Four during that projects examination, deposited material is likely to be winnowed away by natural processes and therefore it is also potentially a temporary effect with seabed recovery likely despite a minimal potential for smothering*'. Deadline 3 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028], REP2-065:8.1 - REP2-065:8.2. REP2-065:8.1 - '*For turbines the Applicants have assumed a 11m monopile with 63m diameter scour protection (i.e. this extends outwards up to 26m from the base of the turbine). This equates to a footprint of 3,117m2 per turbine. If drilling is required arisings will be within this footprint. Within the assessment there is already an assumption of 100%permanent habitat loss within these footprints, there is therefore no need to add additional habitat loss as this would be double counting.*' REP2-065:8.2 - '*As above, in the event of scour protection being used, any arisings would be within this footprint. Should scour protection not be needed the footprint of arisings would be considerably smaller than that of the scour protection and within what has been assessed for habitat loss.* *Benthic monitoring is already included within the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) (Revision 2)** [REP2-043]. The exact survey specification has yet to be determined but the Applicants' methodology would be informed by current monitoring underway and proposed for Dogger Bank A, B, C and Sofia and feedback from Natural England and MMO to determine any lessons learned and ensure that the monitoring is fit for purpose.* *Specific reference to dissipation of drill disposal mounds can be added for operational monitoring if required and the IPMP updated at Deadline 4.*' Deadline 4:	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		we maintain that drill arisings, should be deposited within similar sediment. We continue to query the feasibility of placing drill arising adjacent to the turbines therefore if it can be guaranteed that they will be in the footprint of any scour prevention. In addition, if within the scour prevention and cable protection footprint it compromises any commitments to only utilise removable material i.e. not rock. We also query what would happen in the likely event that it moves into surrounding Annex I sandbanks noting that arisings are not likely to behave the same as Norwegian granite designed to protect infrastructure. We advise this all requires further consideration Deadline 6 No change - The Applicants submission REP5-037 doesn't address our concerns raised in previous advice. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants re-iterate their position as provided in REP2-065:8.1 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] and reiterated above. Deadline 5 During drilling, the drilling platform would sit on top of the monopile being installed, as drilling progresses the arising are discharged into the sea as part of the drilling process, remaining in close proximity to the drilling location whilst minimising interference with any pre-installed scour protection or planned cable corridors. The Applicants have no intention to interfere/move the arisings once deposited on the seabed. The Applicants direct Natural England to the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 3)** [REP4-052] submitted at Deadline 4, which included additional detail with regards to monitoring of drill arisings in Table 1-3 of that document Deadline 6 The Applicants maintain the position previously outlined at Deadline 5. Deadline 7 The Applicants maintain the position previously outlined in REP4-127:C4 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037]: *'During drilling, the drilling platform would sit on top of the monopile being installed, as drilling progresses the arising are discharged into the sea as part of the drilling process, remaining in close proximity to the drilling location whilst minimising interference with any pre-installed scour protection or planned cable corridors. The Applicants have no intention to interfere/move the arisings once deposited on the seabed.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that the position previously outlined at Deadline 5 provides sufficient information to close out this matter.	
C26	We advise that gravity based foundations are not used for offshore platforms. (6.1)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 Issue progressed. As outlined in [AS-141], GBS foundations have been removed from the Projects'	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C42): *'All gravity based structure (GBS) foundations were removed from the Projects' Design Envelope for the Dogger Bank SAC following Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). This is clearly stated in **Chapter 5 Project Description** [APP-071] section 5.3, paragraph 41. Only the ESP, should it be located on the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, retains the potential to be constructed with a gravity base.* *The physical process modelling presented within the DCO application (**Appendix 8-3 Marine Physical Processes Modelling Technical Report** [APP-084]) did include GBS foundations. At the time the modelling was undertaken, GBS foundations were considered the worst case for offshore platforms located within the DBS Array Area only (a maximum of four structures per project) for platforms in the modelling, as this was undertaken before the decision to remove gravity-based foundations for*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		design envelope. We advise that all relevant ES documents are updated to reflect this. Deadline 4 No change - updates to ES documents are required to resolve. We will provide further comment once updates are provided at Deadline 7.	*platforms located in the Dogger Bank SAC was finalised.* *Following completion of the modelling, a commitment was made to not use GBS foundations within the DBS Array Areas. Therefore, the 'modelled' worst case scenario for offshore platform foundations located in the Array Areas assessed in the ES is gravity bases, whereas the realistic worst case scenario relates to monopile foundations. Given that this presented a worse outcome than the realistic worst case scenario, it was not remodelled for the DCO application.* *Additionally, the Applicants are in the process of preparing a change request relating to the relevant design parameters. The Examining Authority (ExA) was notified of the Applicants' intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted to the ExA in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request relates to the removal of an intertidal Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) exit from the Projects' Design Envelope, the removal of all platforms from the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, reductions in the number of platforms in the Array Areas and overall reductions in cable lengths within the Array Areas. The change request will be supported by the **Request for Design Change – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES, thus informing a consultation with relevant stakeholders (as agreed by the ExA) as part of the change request process. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts. These factors, if the change request is accepted, may result in changes to the values discussed above.* *The change proposed of relevance to this comment is the removal of GBS foundations entirely from the Projects Design Envelope'.* End of Examination Position Following submission of the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] at Deadline 7, the Applicants consider this matter to be closed out.	
C27	A commitment to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable and scour protection) at the time of decommissioning should be secured in the DCO, as has been required for all offshore wind farms previously consented within the Dogger Bank SAC. (7.05)	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C43): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's response.* *At this stage, it is not possible for the Applicants to determine whether components would be left in situ or removed from the seabed as part of decommissioning. This will be determined as part of decommissioning planning which will be subject to consultation and would require approval from the regulator towards the end of operational period. It is important to note that infrastructure left in situ may present a lesser impact in terms of potential changes to marine water and sediment quality.* *In order to present an assessment of the worst case scenario the likely significant effects of the deposition of scour and cable protection on habitat loss have been assessed as permanent to a minor adverse significance of effect. The classification of these effects as permanent was undertaken in consultation with stakeholders. This assessment covers the worst case eventuality that cable and scour protection may not*	

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		No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Appendix C4 of our Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5 No change. We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding infrastructure decommissioning and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at Deadline 6. Deadline 6 No Change - Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to public interest tests. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicants have committed [REP6-044] to consider removability of cable protection as part of the development of the final Cable Statement and Decommissioning Programme to be produced for submission to the SoS pre construction. Whilst this is welcome, it is not sufficient to resolve concerns regarding the lack of a full commitment to decommissioning.	*be removed. The impacts of the Projects on the Dogger Bank SAC will be compensated for, with compensation plans to be agreed with stakeholders including Natural England'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided for Point B7 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 3. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position See end of Examination provided to Point B7 in **Table 3-3**.	
C28a	The Applicants have given consideration to identifying areas of shallow glacial till in the Offshore Development Area to inform post-consent discussions on micrositing cables. However, the DCO conditions listed do not secure this as they only refer to identifying priority habitats, which would not include glacial till. We advise this mitigation should be applicable to	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The relevant DCO conditions have been updated to include surficial deposits of glacial till [AS-121]. For consistency, we would welcome this also being updated in the Commitments Register.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C45).	

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	underlying glacial sediments within Dogger Bank SAC as well as priority habitat identified along the ECC, e.g. piddocks. We advise that the DCO conditions listed are updated to secure this.			
C28b	A pre-consent Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment within an updated Cable Statement should also be provided which considers all available geotechnical information to implement mitigation measures which further avoid, reduce and mitigate impacts by ensuring that optimal cable burial depths can be achieved, thus avoiding/reducing the need for cable protection and enabling a realistic worst case scenario to be assessed. (7.09)	Deadline 1 No change. We continue to advise that an updated Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment is provided. Deadline 2 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Applicants have provided an updated Cable Statement which includes an updated Cable Burial Risk Assessment for the Export Cable Route [REP2-040], but not for the Array Areas. If available, this should be provided as well. Deadline 4 No change. The Applicant has indicated that further geotechnical surveys will be undertaken in 2025, however no further revisions will be made to the CBRA within Examination timeframes [REP3-028]. See B3 and B4. Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 No change. The Applicant has indicated that further consideration will not be given to this until post-consent. We understand this to be their fixed position. Natural England also maintain our previous advice. We therefore do not believe that resolution will occur during examination. Therefore unless there is a change in the Applicant's position, our position will remain unchanged for the remainder of the examination. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural	Deadline 3 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C28b): *'It should be noted that an updated CBRA for the Offshore Export Cables was issued within the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 3)** [REP2-039] at Deadline 2. This update includes only the Offshore Development Area being brought forward for consent, amongst a host of other updates.* *The CBRAs produced to date include geophysical and geotechnical information where available, in line with best practice.* *The Applicants would like to reiterate that the final versions of the CBRAs will not be completed within the time frame of examination. There will also be no further updates to any existing CBRAs within the time frame of examination. This is because there is no new information or data available to the Applicants that can provide any further understanding than has already been documented. The Applicants are in the process of planning additional surveys for summer 2025. When the results become available, they will feed into an array area CBRA which will be produced post consent.* *The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter as provided in response to RR-039: C24 in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] and reiterated below:* *The Applicants note Natural England's position regarding the provision of a Cable Statement / Cable Burial Risk Assessment as embedded mitigation. The Cable Statement will continue to be updated throughout the lifetime of the Projects, including any potential additional mitigation agreed by the Applicants.* *Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the Projects' Design Envelope or stakeholder comments will be captured though submissions to the examination.'* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: C28b). See the response provided for Point B8 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 4. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that a realistic worst-case scenario has been assessed with regards to installation of the Offshore Export Cable and associated export cable protection, with the recently updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] providing an updated	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to public interest tests	assessment with the latest design parameters for the Projects. Further updates to the CBRA will be completed following completion of the next surveys planned for Summer 2025.	
C29	We note the Applicants comparison to the scale of impact from fisheries on Dogger Bank SAC compared to OWF, and the recent introduction of byelaws and closure of the sandeel fishery enabling recovery of the sandbank feature from this pressure. Whilst we acknowledge that fishing activity has historically had a broader impact on Dogger Bank, this does not reduce or negate the impacts of other industries which are additional to pre-existing impacts. Neither does mitigation introduced for the impacts of one industry remove the need for another industry to mitigate its impacts. (6.1)	N/A	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C46): '*The comparison with fisheries is valid to highlight the scale of the impact from the Projects and provide some context. As described in the RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]), paragraphs 20, based on previous Government estimates, fisheries impacts affected 70% of the area of the SAC. The removal of this greater pressure is important context for the recovery of the sandbank feature from the Projects' damage impacts which would temporarily affect 0.2% of the area of the SAC (as a worst case)'.* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the initial position as outlined above.	
Priority Habitats and Species Listed under Section 41 list of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 - Document(s) Used:				
C30	The identified biotope 'A4.231 Piddocks with a sparse associated fauna in sublittoral very soft chalk or clay' (and peat and clay exposures more generally) is considered likely to be irreplaceable and is also a priority habitat. The EIA would benefit from considering the importance and rarity of peat and clay exposures - every effort should be made to avoid impacts to these priority habitats, particularly where habitats support rare and/or irreplaceable communities such as boring piddocks. (7.09)	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have provided an update to the DCO [AS-121] including habitats of principal importance in micro-siting requirements.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
C31	There is no strong commitment to avoid/microsite around Priority Habitats as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. The adoption of mitigation measures via a Benthic Mitigation Plan should be further considered in order that impacts (particularly permanent loss), on all Section 41 Habitats are avoided and/or reduced wherever feasible through mitigation measures such as micro-siting. (7.09)	Deadline 1 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have provided an update to the DCO [AS-121] including habitats of principal importance in micro-siting requirements.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

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Disposal of material arising from construction activities - Document(s) Used:				
C32	This document will need updating pre-consent based on comments Natural England has provided on the EIA within Appendix B and C as currently we do not agree with conclusions on the level of impacts. (8.18)	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 No change. We continue to advise that this document will need updating pre-consent. Deadline 3 Issue progressed. The Applicants have provided an updated Disposal Site Characterisation Report [REP2-035] whereby values for the worst case scenarios have been updated. These changes are welcome and reduce the worst case parameters / impacts originally assessed in Chapter 9 Benthic Ecology [APP-085]. However, the reductions do not result in any changes to the outcomes of the original assessments - we continue to advise that that this document will need updating based on comments provided within worksheets B and C of this R&I log as we currently do not agree with conclusions on levels of impacts. Deadline 4 & 5 No change. Deadline 6 No Change. An updated Disposal Site Characterisation Report has been submitted [REP5-026]. Please see comments below and Appendix B6 of our Deadline 6 submission. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C54): '*The RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) and ES (**Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085]) are point in time documents that reflect the position of the Applicants at the time of submission. These will not be updated. Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the project envelope or stakeholder comments will be captured though submissions to the Examination'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 2. Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: CB1 and REP3-060:C28b). See the response provided for Point B1 in **Table 3-3** of this document at Deadline 4, and the response provided for Point C28b of this document in **Table 3-4**. End of Examination Position The Applicants have continued to update the Disposal Site Characterisation Report through Examination following Natural England comments and amendments made to the Projects design parameters and commitments, with the latest version (**Disposal Site Characterisation Report (Revision 4)** [REP7-124] being issued at Deadline 7. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Disposal Site Characterisation Report (Revision 4)** [REP7-124] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
C33	The whole of the offshore windfarm array footprints, the inter-cable platform corridor and the export cable corridors will be disposal locations, but deposition will only occur where	Deadline 1 No change. Please see point C21. Deadline 2	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C55): '*Please see the response to RR-039: C35'.*	

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	possible within the same sediment. Given that sandwave levelling is likely to be undertaken by suction hopper dredge and then sediment released at the sea surface, it is unlikely that this will occur. We advise that disposal options are explored to ensure that sediment is deposited in similar sediment types. (8.18)	No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. We note there is a potential for this to become a red risk depending on the Applicants' Responses. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. The Applicant has stated [REP3-027] (ExQ BE.1.15) / [REP3-028] they will commit to depositing like sediment on like sediment with respect to surficial sand, gravel and silt within Dogger Bank SAC. Separate disposal areas for DBS East, West and the ECC have also been defined and secured in the DCO. We will provide further comment accordingly. An updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4 to reflect this, but highlight that as with other developments currently in Examination which are impacting on Annex I sandbanks, commitments to deposit adjacent to and updrift of the sandbank using a fall/down pipe is also required to fully mitigate impacts. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. The Applicant has committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment both within and outside of Dogger Bank SAC in the updated Cable Statement, this should be secured in the Commitment Register. Please see Appendix B5 for further advice on outstanding mitigation measures. Deadline 6 No change. We note that the Applicant does not intend to commit to depositing sediment updrift of dredging locations. No further information has been provided with respect to using a fall pipe for deposition. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7	Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C33). See the response provided for Point B45 in **Table 3-3** of this document, at Deadline 3. In addition, the Applicants elaborated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-065::3.5): '*The Applicants cannot comment on the positions adopted by, or specific requirements of, other projects in relation to this matter. The Applicants reiterate that they have committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment within the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC, thus ensuring, as Natural England have requested, that sediment both remains within the system and sandbank recovery is enabled.*' Deadline 5 The Applicants can confirm that the commitment to depositing like sediment on like sediment outside of the Dogger Bank SAC applies to the full Offshore Export Cable Corridor. This is detailed in the **Cable Statement (Revision 4)** [REP4-050] and a commitment will be included in the next revision of the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] to be submitted at Deadline 7. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 to Point B17 of **Table 3-3** of this document. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 in Point B44 in **Table 3-3** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that all reasonable mitigation and monitoring proposals have been committed to by the Applicants with regards to potential sand wave levelling within **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] and the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)** [REP7-115]. With regards to the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it. It is expected that discussions relating to these matters will continue post-consent as the Final Cable Statement(s) and CBRAs are prepared.	

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		Issue progressed. See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B17).		
C34	We advise the mitigation in Section 5.2 does not go far enough, especially within the Dogger Bank SAC and in areas where there are priority habitats and/or indirect impacts to designated site features could occur. We advise that the following mitigation measures are adopted (but not exclusively): - All deposition of dredged sediment within the Dogger Bank SAC should be done through the use of a fall pipe and adjacent and upstream of the dredge location in same sediment type to ensure sediment stays within the site. - Drill arisings should be deposited within similar sediment characteristics i.e. not on sandbanks. Therefore, adjacent to turbines is unlikely to be appropriate. - Sandwave deposition should avoid areas of priority habitats under NERC 2006 by the inclusion of a 50m buffer around the NERC habitats. - Deposition of dredge material along the export cable should utilise a fall pipe where there is a risk of increases in suspended sediment concentrations impacting on designated site features and those of ecological importance. (8.18)	Deadline 1 No change. Please see point C21 and C25. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. We note there is a potential for this to become a red risk depending on the Applicants' Responses. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Change 4 No change. See Point C25 re drill arisings. The Applicant has stated [REP3-027] (ExQ BE.1.15) / [REP3-028] they will commit to depositing like sediment on like sediment with respect to surficial sand, gravel and silt within Dogger Bank SAC. An updated Cable Statement will be provided at Deadline 4 to reflect this. We will provide further comment accordingly. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. The Applicant has committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment both within and outside of Dogger Bank SAC in the updated Cable Statement, this should be secured in the Commitment Register. Please see Appendix B5 for further advice on outstanding mitigation measures. Deadline 6 No change. We note that the Applicant does not intend to commit to depositing sediment updrift of dredging locations. No further information has been provided with respect to using a fall pipe for deposition. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: B19). Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:C34). See the response provided for Point B45 in **Table 3-3,** at Deadline 3 and the response provided for Point C25 in **Table 3-4** of this document, at Deadline 3. In addition, *'As noted in REP2-065:8.2 specific reference to dissipation of drill disposal mounds can be added for operational monitoring if required and the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)** [REP2-043] updated. As noted in the response to REP2-065:3.1, the Applicants have committed to depositing like sediment on like sediment within the boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC, thus ensuring, as Natural England have requested, that sediment both remains within the system and sandbank recovery is enabled.* *Commitment C091 of the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] (and secured in the **Draft DCO (Revision 6)** [document reference: 3.1]) commits the Projects to micro-site around UK BAP Priority Habitats, should they be identified during pre-construction surveys.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants can confirm that the commitment to depositing like sediment on like sediment outside of the Dogger Bank SAC applies to the full Offshore Export Cable Corridor. This is detailed in the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] and a commitment will be included in the next revision of the **Commitments Register (Revision 2)** [REP2-025] to be submitted at Deadline 7. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 in Point B44 in **Table 3-3** of this document. The Applicants also direct Natural England to the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] submitted at Deadline 6 which contains updated mitigation proposals. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that all reasonable mitigation and monitoring proposals have been committed to by the Applicants with regards to potential sand wave levelling within **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2)** [REP7-035] and the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5)** [REP7-115]. With regards to the use of a fall / down pipe, as previously noted in responses on this topic, such as that provided most recently in response to MCP.2.7 in **The Applicants Responses to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2)** [REP5-036], the Applicants do not believe the suggested mitigation to be technically feasible and, as such, have made no commitments to delivering it.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 7 Issue progressed. See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B17).	It is expected that discussions relating to these matters will continue post-consent as the Final Cable Statement(s) and CBRAs are prepared.	
C35	For intertidal exit pits, we advise that alternative storage options for material from the landfall exit pits are explored (see also comments (B15) Appendix B)	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 Issue resolved. As detailed in [AS-141], the short trenchless crossing and intertidal exit pits have been removed from the project design envelope.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C57) and reiterated in Point c6 of this table. Deadline 3 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
Scour Prevention – Document(s) Used:				
C36	We advise that this document needs to better consider risk and implications of secondary scouring and highlight the need to minimise environmental impacts through choice of scour prevention / cable protection.	Deadline 1 See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B47-B48). Deadline 2 See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B47-B48). Deadline 3 and 4: See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B47-B48). Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. Natural England that monitoring commitments for secondary scour have been strengthened in the IPMP [REP5-028]. See Appendix B6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further detail regarding scour monitoring.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C58): '*The risk and implications of secondary scour occurring have been considered by the Applicants in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] where it was concluded that any secondary scour effects associated with scour protection would be confined to within a few metres of the direct footprint of that scour protection material. Post-construction surveys are proposed to monitor scour protection measures and secondary scour in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP-080] and the **In-Principle Monitoring Plan** [APP-247]. Monitoring will be used to identify the extent, volume and integrity of any scour protection used and determine whether remedial action is required (**In-Principle Monitoring Plan** [APP-247]).* *The Applicants will update the **Outline Scour Protection Plan** [APP-251] in line with information on secondary scour presented in **Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment** [APP- 080] and the **In-Principle Monitoring Plan** [APP-247]. The updated **Outline Scour Protection Plan** [APP-251] will be submitted in late November 2024*'. Deadline 2 See responses provided for Points B47 to B48 in **Table 3-3**. Deadline 6	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants have added further detail and a firmer commitment to monitoring the performance and integrity of scour protection and secondary scour to the **In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 4)** [REP5-027], submitted at Deadline 5. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point B47 in **Table 3-3** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that the updates provided at Deadline 7 and summarised in Point B47 in **Table 33** provide sufficient clarity regarding potential secondary scour monitoring for this matter to be closed. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **IPMP (Revision 5)** [REP7-115] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
C37	We highlight that as the final SCP will be provided post-consent, if the impacts of plastic based scour protection have not been included and/or fully assessed as part of the Application Environmental Statement / RIAA, a further assessment will be required at that time. And depending on the outcome may require an additional HRA assessment to inform Condition Discharge.	Deadline 3 New issue. Deadline 4 We highlight that as the final SCP will be provided post-consent, if the impacts of plastic based scour protection have not been included and/or fully assessed as part of the Application Environmental Statement/RIAA, a further assessment will be required at that time. And depending on the outcome may require an additional HRA assessment to inform Condition Discharge. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Whilst the Applicant acknowledges that use of plastics associated with scour/cable protection will require further assessment in [REP4-088], we advise that to resolve this matter a named plan should be updated to commit to considering this pre construction when final design plans are submitted. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position	Deadline 4 The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position. Deadline 7 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP5-061: C37 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. Deadline 8 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue resolved. The Applicant has updated the Outline Scour Protection Plan [REP6-046] stating that, should they be selected for use, relevant assessments of the impacts of plastic-based scour protection will be included in the final Scour Protection Plans.		
Cable Statement – Document(s) Used:				
C38	This document will need updating pre-consent based on comments Natural England has provided on the EIA within Appendix B and C, as we currently do not agree with conclusions included within the document. (8.20)	Deadline 1 See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B49). Deadline 2 See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B47-B48). Deadline 3 & 4: See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B49). Deadline 5 See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B49). Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 See Sheet B - Marine Physical Environment (Point B49).	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: C60): '*The Applicants consider that the scale of impacts from cable installation and cable protection is fully justified within the worst case Table 9-1 within* ***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology*** *[APP-085]. Furthermore, the RIAA (****RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4*** *[APP-046]) and* ***Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment*** *[APP-080] and* ***Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology*** *[APP-085] are point in time documents that reflect the position of the Applicants at the time of submission. These will not be updated.* *The* ***Cable Statement*** *[APP-244] will continue to be updated throughout the lifetime of the Projects, including any potential additional mitigation agreed by the Applicants.* *Any updates in assessments as a result of changes to the project envelope or stakeholder will be captured though submissions to the Examination.* *Additionally, the Applicants are in the process of preparing a change request relating to the relevant design parameters. The Examining Authority (ExA) was notified of the Applicants' intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (****Change Notification Letter*** *[PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted to the ExA in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request relates to the removal of an intertidal Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) exit from the Projects' Design Envelope, the removal of all platforms from the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, reductions in the number ofplatforms in the Array Areas and overall reductions in cable lengths within the Array Areas. The change request will be supported by the* ***Request for Design Change – Environmental Assessment Update*** *[document reference C1.1] which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES, thus informing a consultation with relevant stakeholders (as agreed by the ExA) as part of the change request process. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts. These factors, if the change request is accepted, may result in changes to the values discussed above. However, although the quantum of impact will be reduced the significance of effect will remain the same*'. Deadline 6 A figure presenting the indicative locations of cable protection in relation to nearby designated site boundaries has been included in the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] submitted at Deadline 6.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix C - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Deadline 7 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided to REP5-061: C38 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052], repeated below for convenience: *'A figure presenting the indicative locations of cable protection in relation to nearby designated site boundaries has been included in the updated **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [document reference 8.20] submitted at Deadline 6.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that following the substantial updates made through the course of Examination to the **Cable Statement (Revision 5)** [REP6-043] to address Natural England's comments, this matter is closed.	

3.5 Benthic Compensation

Table 3-5 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Benthic Compensation

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
D1	The SNCBs are not in agreement on the presented WCS of habitat damage of Annex I Sandbanks within Dogger Bank SAC. We advise that the points raised in Appendix B and C of our Relevant Representations/Written Representations (RR/WR) are addressed.	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 Please see Natural England's Deadline 2 cover letter Deadline 3 Please see our response to Examiner's Questions (ExQ) BE.1.6-1.8 in Appendix K, and Appendix C3 of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5, 6 & 7 No change.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2): *'The compensation measures presented in **Appendix 3 Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan** [APP-059] do align with those presented in **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060], in terms of the measures proposed. However, the Applicants consider that habitat damage was not adequately assessed within the Plan Level HRA and submits that this should not be included within the effects considered to result in Adverse Effect on Integrity within the RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) – see section 6.4.2.1.1'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]: *'The Applicants have provided responses to Natural England comments on the **Review of evidence on recovery of sandbank habitat following habitat damage** [AS-025] in Table 2-10 of this document.'* Deadline 4	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Comments on the Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027]. REP3-057: BE.1.6 - '*1) The Applicants note that site selection for the benthic compensation is the responsibility of Defra through its strategic compensation workstream.* *2) The Applicants note that Natural England does not agree with the Applicants that disturbance should not contribute to the conclusion of adverse effect on integrity (AEoI) for the Dogger Bank SAC. The Applicants consider that considerable evidence supporting their position is presented in Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2) [REP3-021]. The response to REP3-057: BE.1.7 (below) summarises the Applicants position on the case presented by Natural England.* *3) The Applicants acknowledge this comment.* *4) Please see the response to (2) above.*' Additionally, The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-057: BE.1.8). See the response provided for Point C16 in **Table 3-4** of this document. <u>Deadline 7</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: D1): *'The Applicants note that Table A-2 of **The Applicants' Comments on the Report on the Implications for European Sites** [document reference 17.2] (submitted at Deadline 7) presents four without prejudice scenarios for the consideration by the SoS for different scenarios that could lead to AEoI:* • *Habitat loss from infrastructure alone (the Applicants conclusion);* • *Habitat loss from infrastructure, UXO clearance activities and jack-up footprint;* • *Habitat loss and temporary habitat disturbance; and* • *Habitat loss in addition to an estimated 50m halo effect plus area of temporary habitat disturbance.'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants consider that following the Deadline 7 submission as detailed above, the SoS possesses the necessary information to reach a conclusion based on the Applicants / Natural England's preferred footprint with regards to habitat damage in the Dogger Bank SAC, and that this matter is therefore closed. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
D2	The SNCBs have outstanding concerns about the outcomes of the Impact Assessment and evidence used to support conclusions on scale and significance of potential impacts from cable installation activities and cable protection installation from DBS. Until these issues are resolved we do not agree with the scale and extent of the compensation measures required. This compensation measure will be led by DEFRA (with interested parties), therefore delivery mechanisms, scale costs and timeframes presented by the Applicants cannot and should not be relied upon.	Deadline 1 No change. Deadline 2 Please see Natural England's Deadline 2 cover letter Deadline 3 Please see our response to Examiner's Questions (ExQ) BE.1.6-1.8 in Appendix K of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission for further detail. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. We have reviewed the Applicant's position regarding infrastructure decommissioning and continue to disagree with it. We do not believe it is in the spirit of the Strategic Compensation Strategy or Marine Recovery Fund. In addition, there is no certainty that the Applicant will be able to use the MRF in the way they propose as the policy is not yet final. Therefore, we advise that they are planning at own risk until the MRF launches and the guidance is published. We are in discussions with DEFRA and DESNZ benthic compensation and MRF teams (respectively) and we will provide further update at Deadline 6. Deadline 6 No Change - Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to public interest tests. Deadline 7 No change. Whilst we understand that the Applicant's position on this remains unchanged, we note [REP6-052] that the Applicant will be submitting an updated RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish, Habitats Regulations	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D 0.10.3): '*The scale of impacts from cable installation and cable protection is fully justified within the worst case Table 6-3 of the RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]). Note that the Applicants are in the process of preparing a change request relating to the relevant design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants' intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. The change request relates to the removal of an intertidal Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) exit from the Projects Design Envelope, the removal of all platforms from the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, reductions in the numbers of platforms in the Array Areas and overall reductions in cable lengths within the Array Areas*'. Deadline 3 The Applicant acknowledges the response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Comments on the Responses to ExQ1** [REP3-027]. See the response provided for Point D1 in **Table 3-5** of this document. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 in Point A15 in **Table 3-2** of this document. Regarding the scale and extent of compensation measures required, while the Applicants maintain the worst-case habitat loss calculations presented to date are accurate and well-justified, the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 4)** [REP4-014], **Habitats Regulations Derogation: Provision of Evidence (Revision 3)** [REP4-018] and **Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan (Revision 3)** [REP4-028] will be updated at Deadline 7 to include without prejudice estimates for habitat loss including UXO clearance areas and jack-up footprints, as previously requested by Natural England. This will provide the Secretary of State with the necessary information to determine the scale of required compensation should they concur with Natural England's reasoning on this matter. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that following the Deadline 7 submission as detailed above, the SoS possesses the necessary information to determine the necessary scale of compensation for the Dogger Bank SAC as a result of the Projects, and that this matter is therefore closed.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Derogation: Provision of Evidence and Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan at Deadline 7 to include without prejudice estimates for habitat loss including UXO clearance areas and jack-up footprints. This information may be helpful for determining the scale of required compensation should the SoS conclude that habitat disturbance contributes to AEoI. We will provide comment accordingly.	The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
D3	We recognise that there are likely to be time lags between impact occurring and compensation achieving the desired outcomes. In this scenario, the SNCBs would wish to see the project contribution to the measure to be such that it ensures an overall environmental net positive outcome for the impacted feature over the lifetime of the project. We advise that the points raised in Appendix B and C of our RR/WR are addressed.	Deadline 1 See response to ISH agenda item 6.3 in Annex 2 of our Deadline 1 cover letter. Deadline 2 Please see Natural England's Deadline 2 cover letter Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position No change. This will be for DEFRA to determine as part of the strategic compensation	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.1.5): '*The Applicants expect further information on this topic to be included within an upcoming ministerial statement, due to be issued Q4 2024*'.	
D4	This is still under consideration by DEFRA, NE and JNCC and as yet, nothing has been agreed and/or secured. If and when further information becomes available during Examination we will update accordingly. However, any assurances in the security of this measure should be sought directly from DEFRA.	Deadline 1 See response to ISH agenda item 6.3 in Annex 2 of our Deadline 1 cover letter. Deadline 2 Please see Natural England's Deadline 2 cover letter Deadline 3 No Change. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & 6 No change.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.1.6): '*As previously stated, the Applicants have provided justification for the area to the north of Dogger bank SAC to provide a suitable location for compensation (**Extension of the Dogger Bank SAC for HRA Derogation Compensation – Rationale and Evidence Base** [APP-062]) and have undertaken extensive surveys of this area (this was provided to the Steering Group and is appended to **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060]. The data have been provided to the Defra process.* *The Applicants recognise that other areas are under consideration for the strategic measure and the ultimate location chosen will come from the Defra process*'. End of Examination Position The Applicants note this is not a matter for the Applicants to address, which the Applicants confirmed with Natural England on a call held 1st July 2025.	
Compensation Measure: Reduction of fishing pressures as a supplementary measure for Annex 1 Sandbank				
D5	The use of byelaws to remove fisheries pressures from another SAC has ecological merit. However,	Deadline 1 & 2:	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	outside of a designated site this would require legislative changes to address impacts from other industries that could still occur. It is unclear how this measure will ensure the coherence of the National Site Network. We note that this is a 'supplementary' measure if site extension fails and is outside of the SNCBs' remit.	No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Following publication of the DESNZ Written Ministerial Statement, the Applicants have removed Reduction of Fishing Pressures from their Dogger Bank Compensation Plan [REP2-103]. Natural England supports this decision.	Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D6	Fisheries removal inside or outside of a designated site is not considered viable within the Project's timeframe. Within designated sites the MMO and EIFCA are already implementing byelaws to reduce fisheries pressures and any option outside of a designated site will need agreement from The Crown Estate. Note, outside of designated sites this measure will not be taken forward in the R4 Plan Level Compensation Plan. The evidence is similar to that for strategic compensation for site designation / extension. Therefore we advise that a new designation/designated site extension would be the preferred mechanism.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1 and RR-039: D0.2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D7	The SNCBs are currently not in agreement with the Applicants on the presented WCS of habitat damage of Annex I Sandbanks within Dogger Bank SAC. The SNCBs advise that the points raise in Appendices B and C of our RR/WR are addressed.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D8	The scale/extent of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with Natural England, JNCC or DEFRA.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1 and RR-039: D0.2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D9	We do not believe that this measure will be available in the project timeframes. This is outside of the SNCB remit and the Applicants will need to liaise with TCE, DEFRA, MMO (and EIFCA depending on location).	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1 and RR-039: D0.2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
D10	The location of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with TCE, Natural England, JNCC or DEFRA. This is outside of the SNCB remit and the Applicants will need to liaise with TCE, DEFRA, MMO (and EIFCA depending on location).	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1 and RR-039: D0.2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D11	There is a requirement for changes in legislation for the delivery of this measure outside of designated sites and therefore until that is secured further long-term implementation remains unknown. This is outside of the SNCB remit and the Applicants will need to liaise with TCE, DEFRA, MMO (and EIFCA depending on location).	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1 and RR-039: D0.2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D12	We do not believe that this is currently suitable as a sole compensatory measure. But this may change post examination of this project.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.2.1 and RR-039: D0.2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
Compensation Measure: Seagrass Habitat Creation/Restoration for Annex 1 Sandbank				
D13	Please see the published 'Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan (April 2024). In section 3.4.2 it is stated that *"seagrass restoration is a lower preference measure compared to those supporting the same ecological function of the habitat being compensated for".* We advise the same is true for project level compensation and welcome this not being progressed by the Applicants at this time.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Following publication of the DESNZ Written Ministerial Statement, the Applicants have removed Seagrass Habitat Creation/Restoration from their Dogger Bank Compensation Plan [REP2-103]. Natural England supports this decision.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.3.1). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D14	Please see section 3.4.3 of 'Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan' (April 2024) where the Steering Group's significant concerns about the deliverability of seagrass restoration are summarised. Further, *"The measure is retained in the DBSCP as an*	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D0.3.1). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	additional option which could potentially be employed if the Steering Group considered that it was necessary to supplement other measures, or potentially as an adaptive management response". This is also applicable to project level compensation. NE is in the process of drafting a paper on the current seagrass restoration projects.			
D15	The SNCBs are not in agreement with the WCS of excluding compensation for damage to Annex I sandbank. Please see our comments in Appendices B and C.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D16	The scale/extent of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with the SNCBs. Please see our comments in Appendices B and C.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D17	It is unclear if this measure can be delivered prior to the impacts occurring.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D18	The location of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with the SNCBs.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D19	Long term implementation – N/A	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D20	This measure could only be considered as part of a package providing <10% of the required	Deadline 1 & 2:	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	compensation and/or potential adaptive management for part delivered compensation. There would also be a requirement for the provision of subtidal seagrass, not intertidal. Therefore, we advise that other measures are progressed first. If other options are being progressed, then there is an expectation this compensation will not be taken forward.	No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position As above.	Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
Detailed comments Documents used: [APP-059] 6.2.3 Appendix 3 – Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan [APP-061] 6.2.3.2 Outline Dogger Bank Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan [APP-062] 6.2.3.3 Annex C - Extension of the Dogger Bank SAC for HRA Derogation Compensation – Rationale and Evidence Base				
D21	The Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan (DBSCP) and the project compensation do not align, with the exclusion of compensation requirements for damage to sandbanks. Benthic compensation measures for habitat disturbance of Annex I sandbanks from the project level compensation documents are omitted. We would fully expect the DCO to include compensation for both habitat loss and damage. Further consideration should be given to Plan Level compensation requirements as agreed by the Secretary of State for the Depart of Energy Security and Net Zero.	Deadline 1 No change. Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change - Please see Deadline 2 Appendix 2.1. Deadline 3 No change. Deadline 4 No Change – no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. The Applicant has updated (6.2) Habitats Regulations Derogation Provision of [REP4-019] and RIAA - HRA - Appendix 3 - Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan - Volume 6 [REP4-028] stating "that there is no evidence to substantiate that there could be AEoI from 'halo effects' in habitats such as those found within the Dogger Bank". Natural England disagrees with this - see Appendix C5 of Natural England's Deadline 5 submission for further details.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2): *'The compensation measures presented in **Appendix 3 Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan** [APP-059] do align with those presented in **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060], in terms of the measures proposed. However, the Applicants consider that habitat damage was not adequately assessed within the Plan Level HRA and submits that this should not be included within the effects considered to result in Adverse Effect on Integrity within the RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) – see section 6.4.2.1.1.* *The **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-* *060] states the following (paragraph 3.1.4) (noting that although the following is described as recovery from loss the text appears in relation to habitat damage).* *'Recovery from habitat loss would not occur until decommissioning has been completed, and may take 10-25 years (based on Natural England's advice)'.* *Natural England were asked by the Applicants during The Crown Estate strategic compensation Steering Group meetings to provide evidence for this position, and none has been provided to date. The advice provided in RR-039: Annex C1 - In relation to consideration of small-scale habitat loss within Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), does not present any quantitative evidence on either physical or temporal scale of damage effects.* *The Applicants have provided evidence for its case as signposted above and has provided additional evidence (including survey from the constructed Dogger Bank B project) in **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [document reference: 10.44], which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 7th November 2024.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 6 Issue progressed. The Applicant has now provided estimates with respect to habitat damage and ecological halo effects on a without prejudice basis. However, we consider that further revisions are needed to the halo effects estimate. Please see Appendix C6 for further detail. Deadline 7 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*In summary, the Applicants consider that Natural England's position does not take account of the speed of recovery, which, the Applicants submit, is more rapid than suggested in their advice'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in Table 2-10 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:D21). Deadline 6 See the Applicants' responses regarding halo effects in REP5-055:C4 – C6 and REP5-055:C10 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077: D21): *'On a without prejudice basis, the Applicants have provided revised halo effect footprint estimates in **Appendix E Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)** [document reference 15.7] submitted at Deadline 7.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants strongly disagree that 'halo effects' should be considered with regards to benthic compensation measures for the Dogger Bank SAC. However, following the submission of **Appendix E Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP7-127], the Applicants consider that the SoS possesses the necessary information to determine the potential scale of compensation for the Dogger Bank SAC with regards to any potential 'halo effects', and that this matter is therefore closed. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Appendix E Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP7-127] and **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
D22	If the Applicants are delivering Plan Level compensation, it is assumed that they do not also have to provide project level compensation, but this is not explicit here. It is also unclear why the Applicants have developed a project level compensation plan as DEFRA are moving ahead with work on new designations as a form of compensation following the agreement by DEFRA and SoS in Feb 2024. Ultimately it will be for DEFRA to determine the amount of compensation required, irrespective of what the Applicants have	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan [REP2-103] has been revised to reflect delivery of strategic compensation only.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D3). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	detailed in Section 5 Compensation Quantum. The SNCBs request legal clarification from the Applicants on this.			
D23	It is not clear to the SNCBs the role of the Steering Group going forwards if strategic compensation is progressed by DEFRA, as they will determine individual project 'contribution' as set out above. The SNCBs seeks further clarity from TCE on this matter.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 No change. Not for the Applicants to address. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & 6 No change.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D4): '*The Applicants' agree with Natural England's comment'.* End of Examination Position The Applicants note this is not a matter for the Applicants to address, which the Applicants confirmed with Natural England on a call held 1st July 2025.	
D24	We do not agree with the inclusion of any 'as built' figures as this is not legally secured. The SNCBs advise that figures included in consents are used to inform in combination assessments.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Resolved. We note that the values presented in [REP2-103] use the consented parameters.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D5). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
D25	The SNCBs welcome the Plan Level and the Project Level compensation comparison. But highlight point D2 above with regard to aligning.	N/A	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2): '*The compensation measures presented in **Appendix 3 Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan** [APP-059] do align with those presented in **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060], in terms of the measures proposed. However, the Applicants consider that habitat damage was not adequately assessed within the Plan Level HRA and submits that this should not be included within the effects considered to result in Adverse Effect on Integrity within the RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) – see section 6.4.2.1.1.* *The **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-* *060] states the following (paragraph 3.1.4) (noting that although the following is described as recovery from loss the text appears in relation to habitat damage).* *'Recovery from habitat loss would not occur until decommissioning has been completed, and may take 10-25 years (based on Natural England's advice)'* *Natural England were asked by the Applicants during The Crown Estate strategic compensation Steering Group meetings to provide evidence for this position, and none has been provided to date. The*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			advice provided in RR-039: Annex C1 - In relation to consideration of small-scale habitat loss within Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), does not present any quantitative evidence on either physical or temporal scale of damage effects. *The Applicants have provided evidence for its case as signposted above and has provided additional evidence (including survey from the constructed Dogger Bank B project) in **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [document reference: 10.44], which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 7th November 2024.* *In summary, the Applicants consider that Natural England's position does not take account of the speed of recovery, which, the Applicants submit, is more rapid than suggested in their advice'.*	
D26	Compensation multiplier - this is not agreed or signed up to by the SNCBs and if site extension is progressed, it will be agreed as part of DEFRAs MPA Designation work. Therefore, it is our view that it is not necessary or appropriate to agree this as part of this Examination.	N/A	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D6): '*Compensation multipliers were discussed by the steering group (see section 6.3 of **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060]), however no values were agreed. The Strategic plan states that:* *"Ratios close to 1:1 are appropriate in circumstances where confidence in delivery is high."* *Given that compensation will be delivered strategically via the Defra process, the Applicants consider that there is a high degree of confidence that the quantum and quality of compensation will be high and therefore the proposed ratio is appropriate.* *However, the Applicants do not agree that this ratio should be wholly determined by the Defra process without any input from this consenting process'.*	
D27	The Applicants have submitted information on a possible site extension to the Dogger Bank SAC. The powers to designate sit with DEFRA, and there is a work programme underway to identify potential locations. Therefore, it is the SNCBs view that it is neither necessary nor appropriate to discuss the merits of a particular designated site extension as part of the Dogger Bank South Examination.	N/A	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D8): '*Noted. The Applicants have undertaken extensive efforts to expedite delivery of compensation since the initial stage of the Plan Level HRA process (see RR-039: D 0.1.2) and will continue to provide further input to the Defra process if requested*'.	
D28	Whilst any monitoring requirements may fall under the responsibility of NE or JNCC, this is not yet determined and/or agreed. However, we fully expect monitoring costs associated with compensation measures to be borne by those developers requiring the compensation through	<u>Deadline 1 & 2:</u> No change. <u>Deadline 3</u> No change. Not for the Applicants to address. <u>Deadline 4</u>	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D9): '*Noted. The Applicants reiterate that monitoring should be in line with the monitoring process in the existing MPA network and should be proportionate to that currently undertaken for the existing network'.* <u>Deadline 7</u>	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	the MRF. The SNCBs request further clarity is provided from DEFRA when available.	No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 & End of Examination Position As these issues are not for the Applicant to address, we are making them purple for awareness of the Examining Authority.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's clarification to the ExA on these matters.	
D29	Because the SNCBs believe that disturbance should also be included in any compensation requirements, we do not agree that the need to consider adaptive management finishes once construction has completed. The SNCBs request further clarity is provided from DEFRA when available.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 No change. Not for the Applicants to address. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 & End of Examination Position As these issues are not for the Applicant to address, we are making them purple for awareness of the Examining Authority.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D2): '*The compensation measures presented in **Appendix 3 Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan** [APP-059] do align with those presented in **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060], in terms of the measures proposed. However, the Applicants consider that habitat damage was not adequately assessed within the Plan Level HRA and submits that this should not be included within the effects considered to result in Adverse Effect on Integrity within the RIAA (**RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4** [APP-046]) – see section 6.4.2.1.1.* *The **Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-* *060] states the following (paragraph 3.1.4) (noting that although the following is described as recovery from loss the text appears in relation to habitat damage).* *'Recovery from habitat loss would not occur until decommissioning has been completed, and may take 10-25 years (based on Natural England's advice)'* *Natural England were asked by the Applicants during The Crown Estate strategic compensation Steering Group meetings to provide evidence for this position, and none has been provided to date. The advice provided in RR-039: Annex C1 - In relation to consideration of small-scale habitat loss within Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), does not present any quantitative evidence on either physical or temporal scale of damage effects.* *The Applicants have provided evidence for its case as signposted above and has provided additional evidence (including survey from the constructed Dogger Bank B project) in **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [document reference: 10.44], which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 7th November 2024.* *In summary, the Applicants consider that Natural England's position does not take account of the speed of recovery, which, the Applicants submit, is more rapid than suggested in their advice'.* Deadline 7 The Applicants welcome Natural England's clarification to the ExA on these matters.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix D - Benthic Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
D30	It is the view of the SNCBs that adaptive management will be a consideration of DEFRA's MPA designations programme. The SNCBs request further clarity is provided from DEFRA when available.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 No change. Not for the Applicants to address. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. Deadline 6 & End of Examination Position As these issues are not for the Applicant to address, we are making them purple for awareness of the Examining Authority.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment. No response is required. Deadline 7 The Applicants welcome Natural England's clarification to the ExA on these matters.	
D31	It is not clear if a Dogger Bank CIMP will be required in addition to the Round 4 Plan Level one or the Strategic compensation work. The SNCBs request further clarity is provided from DEFRA and TCE when available.	Deadline 1 & 2: No change. Deadline 3 No change. Not for the Applicants to address. Deadline 4 The SNCBs and DEFRA's view is that the BIMP is undertaken through the MRF process. Therefore there is no need to progress as part of the examination for strategic compensation	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: D3): '*The Applicants have provided a project level plan (**Appendix 3 Project Level Dogger Bank Compensation Plan** [APP-059]) in line with their understanding of Natural England expectations (as expressed in pre-application meetings) for the DCO application. The DCO application materials present the information contained within the Strategic Plan (**Round 4 Dogger Bank Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-060]) in line with submissions from recent project submissions and provide a reference for how the proposals align with the Natural England checklist.* *Whilst it is acknowledged that compensation would be delivered through the strategic mechanism, the Applicants envisage that some form of project level implementation plan will be required, hence the submission of the **Outline Dogger Bank Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan** [APP-061]*'.	

3.6 Fish and Shellfish

Table 3-6 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Fish and Shellfish

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
E1	There are three potential foundation options for the Electrical Switching Platform (ESP) in the Export Cable Corridor (ECC): jacket piles, monopiles, or a gravity-based structure. Clarity is needed on if gravity bases have been included in the worst case scenario for operational habitat loss in the ECC.	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. Natural England no longer deems this an issue due to the removal of the ESP in the ECC through the Change Request.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E9). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
E2	Underwater noise modelling for Atlantic herring for monopile and pin-pile installations uses a worst case position of piling in the northern most point of the DBS West array. The worst case position at the most south-westerly point of the DBS West array should be assessed as this may result in greater overlap with the High and Very High herring spawning potential habitat.	Deadline 1 No Change. Please refer to our response to Action Point 35 from Issue Specific Hearing 2, outlined in Annex 2 of our Deadline 1 Cover Letter, for further detail. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 No change. Please refer to Appendix E3 (Section 1.2) of Natural England's Deadline 3 submission. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. It is Natural England's understanding that the Applicant will be submitting a document to address this issue ([EV10-002] Action Point 24) at Deadline 4. We will review this and provide further comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No Change. As stated in 14.4 The Applicant's Response to Deadline 3 Documents, the Applicants	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E10): *'Noise modelling has been undertaken to maximise the total extent of UWN impacts to present a worst case scenario to Fish and Shellfish Ecology receptors as a whole. Positions for UWN modelling locations were presented and discussed throughout the EIA development process, and modelling locations were agreed with stakeholders and regulators during previous comment rounds and at Expert Topic Group (ETG) meetings which were attended by Natural England representatives. Therefore, revised underwater noise modelling is not proposed'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-053:1.2): *'It is acknowledged that whilst full documentation of the analysis, methodologies, and modelling as submitted within the Application were not available at the Expert Topic Group stage, Natural England were presented with a proposed approach to the assessment of underwater noise impacts. However, no feedback, or alternative approach as to the locations of underwater noise modelling was given when presented with the best available evidence at the time. In the absence of feedback, comment, or advice, assessment was undertaken as indicated to stakeholders and regulators at this stage based on best available information. Had the fundamentals of the modelling parameters proposed been opposed by Natural England then it would have been reasonable to expect this to have been raised at this juncture.* *As originally described within the memo submitted to the MMO dated 2nd November 2023, the Applicants strongly oppose the use of the 135dB behavioural threshold (which was determined for sprat Sprattus sprattus) for the assessment of potential impacts to Atlantic herring Clupea harengus. Whilst*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		will be submitting modelling of the most south-westerly point of DBS West Array Area at Deadline 5. Natural England will provide comment at Deadline 6. <u>Deadline 6</u> Issue progressed. The Applicant has provided the requested updated modelling in [REP5-042]. This has confirmed that the south-west location of the DBS West array is more appropriate for assessing the impacts of the arrays together. See E3 and Appendix E6 of our Deadline 6 submission. <u>Deadline 7</u> No Change. No new information has been provided at this deadline.	*sprat and Atlantic herring are both species within the family Clupeidae, this is not a suitable justification for implementation of this threshold given the evidence presented by Hawkins et al. (2014). The scientific publications upon which this threshold is based (Hawkins and Popper, 2014; Hawkins et al., 2014)* ***explicitly state that: "these data cannot yet be used to define the sound exposure criteria"; and "We would stress, however, that it would be premature to use these data to define sound exposure criteria for sprat and mackerel"*** *respectively. Therefore, on the evidence of the authors' own position, the use of 135dB as a behavioural threshold should not be incorporated into MMO advice for the purposes of EIA. Guidance for impact thresholds is provided within Popper et al. (2014), (published the same year, and noting the common authors between these publications), the underwater noise impact thresholds presented have been considered best practice guidance since its publication and are the ones used in the Applicants' assessment (**Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]).* *Should modelling have been undertaken at alternative locations, no change in the assessment is predicted, as discussed in detail with Underwater Noise Action Point 34, Table 4-1 within **The Applicants' Responses to January 2025 Action Points (Revision 2)** [AS-155] and presented within the **Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel** [AS-105]. In summary:* • The underwater noise modelling locations were chosen to give the greatest geographical spread across the DBS site, in the deepest water (acoustically the 'worst case'). • he 'mapping' of receptors in the marine environment, especially mobile ones should be treated as indicative of their location, location of spawning potential or nursery grounds etc, rather than precise locations or areas. This is due to the uncertainties with all marine data sets and the need therefore to combine a range of data sources to inform understanding. • Small changes in noise are not in general distinguishable, and at the ranges of potential disturbance of many kilometres, this should lead to very small changes in the level of noise if it were from the south-west location that would not materially change the risk of disturbance on fish. *Given therefore that the 'mapping' of both noise and receptor presence is not precise (but based nonetheless on best available evidence), the Applicants consider that the assessment is robust and reassessment is not necessary* *Notwithstanding the above, the Applicants were asked by the Examining Authority in Issue Specific Hearing 5 (Action No. 24, Action Points from Issue Specific Hearing 5 (ISH5) held on 10th April 2025 [EV10-002]) to undertaken noise modelling taking into account piling at the southwestern corner of DBS West. This work is being undertaken and the results will be presented at Deadline 5.'* <u>Deadline 7</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-074:1): '*When considering the worst case scenario for arrays together, the Applicants maintain that when considering Fish and Shellfish Ecology as a complete topic, the original scenario maximises extent and therefore magnitude of the impact remains a worst case. Therefore, the chapter will not be updated to reflect the revised piling locations. Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish (Revision 2) [document reference 7.11]*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			*has however been updated at Deadline 7 at the request of the Examining Authority to include **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and any technical notes relevant to the assessment.* *When considering herring spawning grounds specifically (one life stage of one species), it is acknowledged that a greater overlap of underwater noise impacts at the 135dB contour will occur when piling at the alternative modelled locations. The overlap of this scenario with the relevant spawning grounds is presented in detail within Modelling of underwater noise associated with alternative piling locations to inform potential impacts on Atlantic herring spawning grounds [REP5-042]. The findings made within this document are being used to inform the ongoing 'without prejudice' discussions on a piling restriction with the MMO.* *The Applicants again highlight the questionable nature of the likelihood of the 135dB contour devolving any kind of significant effect on spawning herring. When considering the worst case in isolation, the Applicants again maintain that maximisation of the extent and therefore magnitude of the impact remains a worst case. It should however be noted that the Applicants are including, within the ongoing 'without prejudice' discussions, a requirement to carry out further underwater noise modelling based on the final project design – including any proposed mitigation - post-consent which will include the Projects in isolation, with the results of this modelling informing piling restrictions. The wording for this restriction has been agreed with both NE and MMO in email correspondence and has been included in the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1] on a without prejudice basis.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants acknowledge the MMO's and Natural England's position on this topic but maintain their position on the 135db threshold. The Applicants provided a summary of their position through Examination which was submitted at Deadline 7 (see **Summary of Herring Noise Impact Discussions During Examination** (REP7-XX)). However, to address the potential that the Secretary of State does not agree with the Applicants' position on this matter, the Applicants are currently undertaking 'without prejudice' discussions with the MMO to determine appropriate mitigation for the impacts of piling on potential herring spawning grounds via the use of primary and / or secondary noise reduction measures, and temporal mitigation. Current 'without prejudice' discussions include mitigation relating to underwater noise (UWN) contours up to and including 135dB. Through these discussions a condition drafted on a without prejudice basis has been agreed between the Applicants, MMO and Natural England and has been inserted into the **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [document reference 3.1] submitted at Deadline 7 on a without prejudice basis which will allow the Secretary of State to apply this restriction in the final order, should they be minded to do so.	
E3	Further clarity is needed regarding simultaneous piling for monopiles for the in-isolation development scenario. For two monopiles installed simultaneously, the worst case scenario for	Deadline 1	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E11): '*Sandeel species do not possess a swim bladder, and therefore fall within the receptor group "fish without a swim bladder" for the purposes of assessment of underwater noise impacts. This receptor*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	underwater noise and vibration impacts on sandeel would be two simultaneous monopile piling events in the DBS West array area. We advise that underwater noise models are provided for the worst case scenario in each build out scenario.	No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 Issue Progressed. We welcome the Applicants have reassessed monopiling impacts for the in-isolation development scenario in [AS-142]. However when reassessing the projects combined, only pin pilling is reassessed. Natural England require further clarification as to why information on monopiling has been provided when assessing impacts of DBS West and East together. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Natural England would like to highlight a wording error in our Deadline 3 R&I Log that was intended to ask: Natural England require further clarification as to why information on monopiling has not been provided when assessing impacts of DBS West and East together. This was in relation to [AS-141] 10.49 Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works. Deadline 6 No Change. The updated modelling provided by the Applicant indicates that two monopiles in the DBS West array would provide the WCS for the in-isolation build out scenario. Please see Appendix E6 for further detail. Deadline 7 No Change. No new information has been provided at this deadline.	*group is the least sensitive of all receptor groups to underwater noise impacts, and are capable of detecting particle motion only, and not sound pressure (Popper et al., 2014). See response to RR-039: E 1 for further discussion.* *Noise modelling has been undertaken to maximise the total extent of UWN impacts to present a worst case scenario to Fish and Shellfish Ecology receptors as a whole. Positions for UWN locations, including for concurrent piling, were presented and discussed throughout the EIA development process, and modelling locations were agreed with stakeholders and regulators during previous comment rounds and at ETG meetings. Dogger Bank South (DBS) West and East concurrent locations were selected as this scenario represents the impact resulting in greatest extent of noise disturbance, in terms of area. It should be noted that an updated Underwater Noise Modelling Report will be issued for consultation alongside the **Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference C1.1]. This report will be updated to account for the potential removal of ESP from the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, and the resulting changes to concurrent piling scenarios which would result from this removal if the change request was accepted. It is expected that the change request will be submitted to the ExA in early January 2025 following the targeted consultation.* *Revised sandeel heat mapping using the Reach et al. (2024) methodology will be presented within the **Heat Mapping Report** [document reference 10.43] which will be overlaid with impacts ranges for "fish with a swim bladder not used in hearing", to provide further context around the sandeel potential within the region. This report will be submitted in late November 2024'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP3-060: E3): *'As discussed in the **Noise Reduction Technical Note** [document reference 14.9], the Applicants explain that:* *'Within the original Environmental Impact Assessment, separate scenarios were presented for the Projects in isolation and together as described within section 10.6.1.3.5. of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]. These scenarios aimed to maximise spatial extent of underwater noise impacts to ensure the assessment of a worst case scenario applicable to all receptor groups.* *The together scenario was represented by three simultaneous pin piles at DBS East, DBS West, and at the Offshore Export Cable Corridor Electrical Switching Platform (ESP). This scenario maximised both spatial extent, and temporal extent due to the increased piling time required for the installation of pin piles.* *For the in isolation scenario two simultaneous monopile installations were considered within the Array Areas, with no simultaneous piling to occur at the ESP. In this scenario a precautionary approach to modelling was used to simplify assessment clarity whilst ensuring a worst case assessment was undertaken. Separation between the two piling locations within the Array Areas (the north most location at DBS West, and the south most location at DBS East) was used, rather than using two piling locations within a single Array Area as would be realistic in the in isolation scenario. This precautionary*	

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			approach over-estimated the spatial extent of underwater noise in the in isolation scenario, but improved the clarity of the assessment. *Following revisions to project design presented within **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and **Appendix A: Fish and Shellfish Environmental Assessment Update** [AS-142] the potential for piling at the ESP was removed from assessment. In terms of temporal impacts, simultaneous pin piling at two locations remains the worst case scenario for the together assessment (maximising temporal extent). However, in terms of spatial impact, which remains the key consideration when determining potential impacts on Atlantic herring in this Technical Note, simultaneous monopiling at the same two locations that were used in the original assessment remained the worst case scenario for the in isolation scenario (maximising spatial extent). For the purposes of this Technical Note, therefore, the in isolation scenario is the same as the worst case together scenario."* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: E3): *'The Applicants would like to note that sandeel do not possess a swim bladder which is involved in hearing and so the impact ranges for the effects of mortality and recoverable injury are highly localised.* *However, the Applicants responded to the point regarding the worst case scenario in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: E3):* *'As discussed in the **Illustrative Noise Reduction Technical Note** [REP4-094], the Applicants explain that:* *'Within the original Environmental Impact Assessment, separate scenarios were presented for the Projects in isolation and together as described within section 10.6.1.3.5. of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]. These scenarios aimed to maximise spatial extent of underwater noise impacts to ensure the assessment of a worst case scenario applicable to all receptor groups.* *The together scenario was represented by three simultaneous pin piles at DBS East, DBS West, and at the Offshore Export Cable Corridor Electrical Switching Platform (ESP). This scenario maximised both spatial extent, and temporal extent due to the increased piling time required for the installation of pin piles.* *For the in isolation scenario two simultaneous monopile installations were considered within the Array Areas, with no simultaneous piling to occur at the ESP. In this scenario a precautionary approach to modelling was used to simplify assessment clarity whilst ensuring a worst case assessment was undertaken. Separation between the two piling locations within the Array Areas (the north most location at DBS West, and the south most location at DBS East) was used, rather than using two piling locations within a single Array Area as would be realistic in the in isolation scenario. This precautionary approach over-estimated the spatial extent of underwater noise in the in isolation scenario, but improved the clarity of the assessment.* *Following revisions to project design presented within **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and **Appendix A: Fish and Shellfish Environmental Assessment Update***	

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			[AS-142] the potential for piling at the ESP was removed from assessment. In terms of temporal impacts, simultaneous pin piling at two locations remains the worst case scenario for the together assessment (maximising temporal extent). However, in terms of spatial impact, which remains the key consideration when determining potential impacts on Atlantic herring in this Technical Note, simultaneous monopiling at the same two locations that were used in the original assessment remained the worst case scenario for the in isolation scenario (maximising spatial extent). For the purposes of this Technical Note, therefore, the in isolation scenario is the same as the worst case together scenario.' Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 in Point E2 of this table. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position stated at Deadline 6. Underwater noise modelling will also be updated post-consent based on the final Project Design as part of the mitigation for herring to update the 'Without Prejudice' Herring Spawning Plan [REP7-135] and for marine mammals within the **Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (Revision 5)** [REP7-117].	
E4	The Applicants have provided underwater noise modelling for three pin-piles piled concurrently across the array areas and in the ECC, and has committed to no concurrent monopiling occurring across the arrays area with the ECC, clarity needed as it is unclear if two monopiles (one in DBS West, one in DBS East) and pin piling in the ECC could occur concurrently. Clarification is needed on the worst case scenario for concurrent piling. In the case that monopiling in the array areas can occur concurrently with pin piling within the ECC, we advise the Applicants to provide underwater noise models and figures to assess impacts on fish receptors.	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change Deadline 3 Issue Resolved. Natural England no longer deems this an issue due to the removal of the need for piling in the ECC.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E12). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
E5	The Applicants should utilise sandeel abundance data (such as the North Sea sandeel dredge survey) to support the assessment of impacts on localised sandeel populations (currently only habitat suitability heat maps and drop down video have been used).	Deadline 1 Natural England will be providing comments on AS-105 Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel (Revision 1) at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 Due to staff absence, Natural England will be providing detailed comments on Fish and Shellfish at Deadline 3.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E13): *'Sources used to determine the fish and shellfish ecology baseline draw on both commercial and scientific datasets. Site-specific surveys were not undertaken to inform the Fish and Shellfish Ecology chapter (**Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]), as project specific surveys on fish and shellfish often fail to provide an accurate representation of local baselines due to the limited temporal window over which they may realistically occur. Significant variation in species richness and abundance as a result of seasonal variation is better captured in landings data and long term scientific data sets, as have been used within this assessment. Sandeel presence data from site-specific surveys*	

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		Deadline 3 No Change. Please refer to Appendix E3 for further detailed comments on [AS-105] Heat Mapping Report. Deadline 4 No Change. Whilst we welcome the Applicant has provided a figure of the North Sea Sandeel Survey data in Appendix A of their response to Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028], and that this further confirms the presence of sandeel in the array, there is no presentation of data on relative abundance/population distribution within the project area compared to wider region. It is our understanding that abundance indices are available from the NSSS data set and would help to support the assessment of sandeel suitability. Natural England request the Applicant includes these updates in relevant assessments. Deadline 5 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No Change. Please see the response to question R17.6 in Annex 2 of our Deadline 6 Cover Letter. Deadline 7 No Change. Whilst Natural England acknowledges the Applicant's Response to the Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] on this subject, this does not alter our previous advice [REP5-056] for the Applicant to provide data on relative abundance/population distribution within the project area compared to the wider region. We agree with the MMO [REP5-049: 1.7.2] that the presentation of this data at this late stage in the application process will not significantly change the outcomes of the assessment, but would also echo that it is disappointing that the Applicant	*has been used to support the characterisation of the site for sandeel habitat.* *Revised heat maps for both herring and sandeel using the MMO-approved Kyle-Henney et al. (2024), and Reach et al. (2024) methodologies respectively, will be presented within the* ***Heat Mapping Report*** *[document reference 10.43], to be submitted in late November 2024'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-053:1.1): *'The VMS data presented within the* ***Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel*** *[AS-105] (referenced as MMO, 2023) represents fishing data from the years 2016-2020, incorporating data from multiple years. It is labelled 2020 VMS data in the* ***Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel*** *[AS-105] due to the most recent revision date being 1st January 2020, but referenced as MMO (2023) in compliance with the data copyright (for further details see the attribution statement section within MMO (2023), and the response given within the response to REP2-061:16 within* ***The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents*** *[REP3-028]).* *Reducing Herring spawning seasonal restriction* *Noise impacts and disturbance impacts are separate issued devolved by different aspects of the Projects which will be managed and delivered separate. The proposed installation of export cables remains the sole activity with the potential to result in physical disturbance to spawning habitat for Atlantic herring. Please refer to the response in REP3-053:1.2 below detailing the Applicants' position with regards to underwater noise.* *As stated in* ***The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents*** *[REP3-028], potential cumulative effects with projects such as EGL2 are expected to be short term due to the lack of overlap in construction activities and the expected recovery of the seabed post-installation.* *Information relating to the refinement of the Atlantic herring spawning seasonal restriction has been presented in the* ***Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel*** *[AS-105]. This information includes consideration of variation in environmental factors that may alter the exact timing of spawning.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-071:R17.6): *'The use of North Sea Sandeel Survey (NSSS) data is discussed within REP5-056: E4.3 in* ***The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents*** *[REP6-052], and is presented again here for clarity:* *As has been stated throughout the consultation period, confidence in the accuracy of sandeel abundance data (including the NSSS) is inherently limited by survey equipment and the poor resolution at a project-specific scale. The Applicants have included NSSS data in their responses throughout the consultation period via presence/absence at sample stations, rather than the abundance value at the sample stations.*	

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		has failed to present this data, despite repeated requests.	*This enables NSSS data to be aligned (not included) with the Reach et al. (2024) heat mapping methodology used to inform the location of potential supporting habitat for sandeel.* *Furthermore, there is limited information available within the public domain that describes the exact method of data collection within the NSSS. It is understood that* ***the total number of sandeel caught within each sample is not recorded****, but extrapolated from a subset of the sample used to collect biometric information (e.g. age class, length, weight, etc). Therefore, the Applicants maintain that the inclusion of the NSSS data to support the presence / absence OneBenthic data layer used in the heat mapping methodology is the most appropriate use of the NSSS data. If it were the case that NSSS data was available at sufficient resolution within the Offshore Development Area, (such as the resolution provided by the environmental survey to characterise the distribution of sediment) it would be more appropriate to extract abundance data for the purposes of characterising variation in the size of the stock. In the absence of this resolution, the NSSS has been included in a manner that maximises confidence in the data it portrays.* *NSSS abundance data has been explored on the DATRAS / ICES Data Portal, however no way to investigate these data as requested appears available. Whilst the dataset can be downloaded, spatial and abundance data are provided as separate files, with no way to match them. As a result, any abundance data relates to the entire North Sea area, presented within the indicative data extent window as reaching from the UK all the way to territorial waters of the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Norway. As a result, any investigation of abundance data is not considered fit for purpose as it is currently available. Further, the MMO state in REP5-049: 1.7.2 that they "do not believe the presentation of this data at this late stage in the application process will significantly change the outcomes of the assessment". It must be restated that, even in the absence of NSSS data, sandeel were assumed to have been present across the whole of the Offshore Development Area based on Reach et al. (2024) methodology heat mapping (i.e. the potential for spawning habitat is used as a proxy for sandeel presence, which is a worst case assumption). Whilst examination of NSSS data confirms this finding, it does not change any assessment made throughout the ES. This is clarified within REP2-061:19 where it is stated that "the inclusion of NSSS would not add benefit to the assessment or change the conclusions of the* ***Heat Mapping Report*** *[AS-105]. Furthermore, sandeel were originally considered to be present within the Array Areas and assessed as such within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and therefore the addition of NSSS data would not alter the original EIA conclusions made within the ES.'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants maintain the position stated at Deadline 6. The Applicants contacted Natural England via email on the 6th June 2025 to request if the abundance indices data was available with sample location information for the requested mapping. Natural England provided clarity on the confusion and agreed that the NSSS data should not be used as a mapping layer, but instead interpreted as a separate data set. The Applicants cannot isolate the abundance data of relevance to the Projects' Offshore Development Area from the whole North Sea survey area due to the ICES data download spreadsheets not providing a common ID value between the survey method sheet (including sample station locations) and the biometric sheet (including the abundance estimate). Therefore, the	

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			Applicants reiterate that the NSSS abundance data is of insufficient quality to improve confidence in the assessment above that afforded by the presence/absence data.	
E6	EMF impacts from cables on sandeel and Atlantic herring have not been considered. We advise that the impacts of EMF on sandeel and herring high potential spawning habitat should be assessed.	Deadline 1 Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 Due to staff absence, Natural England will be providing detailed comments on Fish and Shellfish at Deadline 3. Deadline 3 & End of Examination Deadline Natural England remain concerned about EMF in array areas which include high and very high sandeel spawning habitat. The Applicants highlights that some receptors exhibit flexibility in their range of habitats, but Natural England highlights the high site fidelity known for sandeel. Whilst we agree they are less electrosensitive when compared with elasmobranchs, there is insufficient evidence to confirm no impact on sandeel, particularly as lost habitat across the sandbank. However, we acknowledge that the lack of evidence base would prevent a more accurate assessment being undertaken.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E18): '*When compared to elasmobranchs, the sensitivity of other Fish and Shellfish receptor groups is well understood to be significantly lower due to their lack of specialised electrosensitive sensory organs used for predation. This difference in EMF sensitivity is acknowledged in the preceding sentence to that cited within the comments: "Other fish receptor groups (e.g. pelagic, demersal, and migratory) are comparatively less reliant on electro sensitivity and are highly mobile and / or exhibit flexibility in their range of habitats." This statement includes both sandeel and herring species. No available literature presenting potential impacts associated with EMF at the levels anticipated for this development on these species has been identified, and so the potential sensitivity on elasmobranchs (medium) should be considered a worst case. In combination with the negligible magnitude of impact for all construction scenarios, EMF effects arising from cables during the operational phase are determined to have a negligible effect on all Fish and Shellfish receptors*'. Deadline 4 and End of Examination Position The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment.	
E7	Habitat loss for sandeel and herring from UXO clearance have not been assessed as "specific surveys to identify potential locations of UXO would not be undertaken until the DCO for the Projects is granted". A nominal assessment should be included as has been done for other receptors, e.g. marine mammals and benthic.	Deadline 1 Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 Due to staff absence, Natural England will be providing detailed comments on Fish and Shellfish at Deadline 3. Deadline 3 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E19): '*A nominal assessment of UXO clearance impacts is included within the assessment of underwater noise impacts within section 10.6.1.4., with specific impact ranges relating to UXO presented in Table 10-23 (**Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]).* *The **Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage** [document reference 11.7], submitted alongside the responses to this relevant representation) notes that Dogger Bank B undertook monitoring of craters caused by high-order UXO clearance in 2023. The UXO clearance campaign was completed in February-March 2023, with a survey of the craters in June 2023 at five of six clearance locations. This survey showed that in all cases the craters had infilled rapidly, in some cases infilling was largely complete, and even where there was the least recovery in (DBB_027) a 0.8m crater infilled to approximately 0.4m depth. Due to the temporary, episodic and relatively localised nature of the impact, recoverability of the receptors and the extent of the receptors across*	

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		Deadline 4 No change - The Applicant has submitted a UXO clearance information report [REP3-013] at Deadline 3, however Natural England would like clarification on the Applicant's justification for focusing solely on marine mammals for direct injury impacts, and not including fish species. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. For further information see our response to Issue Specific Hearing Action 28 in Appendix M5 Deadline 6 Natural England acknowledges the Applicant's response to the Deadline 4 documents [REP5-037] that they included a statement on impacts from UXO on fish in the ES Chapter [APP-091], however we maintain our previous advice that a nominal assessment of habitat loss for herring and sandeel should be included in relation to UXO clearance. We do however acknowledge that at this late stage of Examination, it may not be possible to include this. We therefore advise that it is included in the Marine Licence application for UXO clearance. Deadline 7 The Applicant has highlighted in their Response to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] that the RIAA will be updated at Deadline 7 to include this habitat loss into the projects footprint. We will provide further comment at Deadline 8.	*the wider region, the magnitude of potential habitat loss from UXO clearance is considered negligible.* *As such, the potential effect of habitat loss resulting from UXO clearance is considered to be minor adverse*'. Deadline 5 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129:E7): *'As noted in the Applicant's response to RR-039: E 19 in **The Applicants' Responses to Relevant Representations** [PDA-013], a nominal assessment of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance impacts is included within the assessment of underwater noise impacts within section 10.6.1.4 of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091], with specific impact ranges relating to UXO presented in Table 10-23 of the chapter.'* Deadline 7 The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's response. End of Examination Position The Applicants remain of the opinion that UXO clearance should not be considered as habitat loss. Nonetheless, to allow decision making by the Secretary of State the Applicants have provided updated estimates of habitat loss (including UXO clearance) on a without prejudice basis based on Natural England's comments in the in Table 6-7 of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] submitted at Deadline 7. It should be noted that UXO clearance is not included in this application. It will be the subject of separate Marine Licence applications.	
E8	Impacts from localised heating from the cables have been assessed in reference to water temperature increase, with no specific receptors identified as being impacted. Further assessment is required for localised heating of sediment and possible impacts to high/very high potential sandeel and herring spawning habitat.	Deadline 1 Natural England are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2. Deadline 2	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E20): *'As is discussed in relation to sea water heating within section 10.6.2.7 of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091], whilst the heating of sediments surrounding the cable may occur, this is anticipated to be highly local to the cable. Modelling of changes in sediment temperature has been undertaken for a range of offshore cable developments in UK waters, with results indicating that changes in sediment temperature are not significant beyond an order of meters. Modelling undertaken for the NorthConnect project indicated that changes in sediment temperature of >1°C were limited to within 2.5m of the cable,*	

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		Due to staff absence, Natural England will be providing detailed comments on Fish and Shellfish at Deadline 3. <u>Deadline 3</u> No change. Our previous advice to assess localised heating impacts from cables remains. <u>Deadline 4</u> No change - The Applicant submitted [REP3-032] 13.7 Bed Mobility and Thermal Environment (Revision 1) at Deadline 3, however this report does not present any new information that changes our current advice. <u>Deadline 5</u> No change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. For further information see Appendix E5 and our response to Issue Specific Hearing Action 27. <u>Deadline 6</u> No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 7</u> No Change. Natural England acknowledges the Applicant's Response to the Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] on this subject, however we maintain our previous advice that an assessment of localised heating of sediment is provided to demonstrate that there would be no LSE to both sandeel and herring. We note that the evidence cited by the Applicant suggests that sediment could be heated from cables to a distance that would overlap with sandeel burrowing depths.	*and changes of >7°C being limited to within 0.2m. Therefore, the limited spatial extent of heating associated with cables are unlikely to result in a significant effect'.* <u>Deadline 6 and End of Examination Position</u> As presented in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-056: E3): *'As stated within 10.6.2.7 of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091] "Localised heating of sea water may occur, but this is limited to distances of tens of cm, and is likely to be of small magnitude, therefore no additional impact is predicted from heating effects (Boehlert and Gill, 2010; Moray Offshore Windfarm Ltd, 2018)."* *Even when considering lab based studies, heat transfer around subsea cables, under optimal heat transfer conditions, are shown to be limited to an order of meters in sediments of maximum permeability. Sediment of lower permeability limited heat transfer effects to approximately 40cm (Emeana et al., 2016). Assumptions made for the potential impacts of Electromagnetic Field (EMF) assume a 4m radius, with findings indicating a negligible effect, which is not significant in EIA terms. Whilst it is evident that the cable route will pass through regions suitable for sandeel potential, any change in sediment temperature will be limited to the area immediately surrounding the cable and thus, it can be reasonable to assume that there would be no likely significant effects as a result.* *As such, the Applicants do not consider it necessary to include validation of heat impacts into the monitoring proposed under conditions 22 of DMLs 1 and 2.'*	
E9	Clarity is needed on how localised impacts on high potential spawning habitat loss due to cable protection have been assessed for sandeel and Atlantic herring.	<u>Deadline 1 & 2:</u> No Change <u>Deadline 3, 4, 5 & 6</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E21): *'Impacts associated with potential habitat loss resulting from cable protection are assessed within section 10.6.2.6 of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]. Within this section both sandeel and herring species are discussed, with these species forming the basis of a determination of medium sensitivity to this impact for both benthic and pelagic fish receptor groups respectively'.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		deadline. Deadline 7 The Applicant has highlighted in their Response to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] that an updated RIAA will be provided at Deadline 7. We will provide further comment at Deadline 8.	Deadline 6 As presented in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-056: E2): *'Where values provided within this response supersede those given within assessment of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091], values will be replaced and updated as appropriate, and any potential changes to determined impact will be discussed within the next revision of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091] to be submitted at Deadline 7.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants can confirm an updated **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-044] was submitted at Deadline 7 alongside the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016]. The area of habitat loss with relation to cable protection has been reduced due to the Applicants' commitment to cable bundling. In addition, to allow decision making by the Secretary of State the Applicants have provided updated estimates of habitat loss on a without prejudice basis based on Natural England's comments in the in Table 6-7 of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] submitted at Deadline 7. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
E10	Include a robust assessment of the potential worst case area of impact on benthic communities, particularly those highlighted as spawning areas along the ECC, and within Dogger Bank SAC sandbank feature, and the nature and scale of that impact, as a result of changes to physical and biological process following the placement of structures and cable/scour protection on the seabed (benthic 'ecological halo effect').	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will be providing comment on this alongside our comments on Benthic and Intertidal Ecology at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change. Please refer to C8 of the Risk and Issues log and Natural England's Deadline 2, Appendix C2. Deadline 4 No change - Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Risk and Issues Ref C8 and Appendix C4 for further details. It is Natural England's understanding that the Applicant will be submitting a	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E22): *'Discussions regarding the "ecological halo effect" were not raised during previous rounds of comments, or at ETG meetings undertaken prior to DCO submission. Potential impacts as a result of the developments as determined in collaboration with stakeholders and regulators are presented within the ES chapter. See the Applicants' response to RR-039: C6 in Table 2.4.1 for further details on this matter'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants referred to REP2-065:1.1 and REP2-065:1.4 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] which are detailed below. REP2-065:1.1 - *'The Applicants are grateful for the further exposition of Natural England's understanding of this potential impact and their concerns for gaps within our assessments. The Applicants have responded to detailed points below and consider that the impact assessment does indeed account for the potential impacts of concern.'* REP2-065:1.4 - *'Benthic monitoring is already included within the **IPMP (Revision 2)** [REP2-043]. The exact survey specification has yet to be determined but the Applicants' methodology would be informed by current monitoring underway and proposed for Dogger Bank A, B, C and Sofia and feedback from*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		document to address this issue (ISH Action Point 41) at Deadline 4. We will review this and provide further comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. See Appendix C5 for further details. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. The Applicant has presented an assessment of ecological halo effects [REP5-041]. However, we consider that the estimate for worst case area of loss needs further revision. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further details. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to determine any lessons learned and ensure that the monitoring is fit for purpose.* *Specific reference to colonisation of foundations / scour protection can be added for operational monitoring if required and the IPMP updated.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:E10): *'On a without prejudice basis, the Applicants have provided revised halo effect footprint estimates in **Appendix E Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)** [document reference 15.7] submitted at Deadline 7.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants remain of the opinion that halo effects should not be considered as habitat loss. However, to allow decision making by the Secretary of State the Applicants have provided updated estimates of habitat loss (including potential Halo effects) on a without prejudice basis based on Natural England's comments in the in Table 6-7 of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] submitted at Deadline 7. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
E11	The Applicants have modelled fish as both stationary and fleeing receptors for underwater noise thresholds. For all underwater noise modelling Natural England advise that fish are assessed as stationary receptors, our conclusions on impacts will therefore be based on the values provided that are in line with this advice.	Deadline 1 No action needed. End of Examination Position The Applicant has modelled fish as both stationary and fleeing receptors for underwater noise thresholds. For all underwater noise modelling Natural England advise that fish are assessed as stationary receptors, our conclusions on impacts will therefore be based on the values provided that are in line with this advice.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E23): *'All determinations of underwater noise impacts on fish and shellfish species have assumed species to be stationary receptors as specified within section 10.6.1.4. and section 10.6.2.4. of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]'.* End of Examination Position The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position.	
E12	'soft start and ramp-up' approaches are not appropriate piling mitigation measures for impacts to fish. We therefore advise they are removed from	Deadline 1 & 2: No Change. Deadline 3	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E 26): *'All determinations of underwater noise impacts on fish and shellfish species have assumed species to be stationary receptors as specified within section 10.6.1.4. and section 10.6.2.4. of **Chapter 10 Fish and***	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	the assessment and a more appropriate worst case scenario is presented.	Issue Progressed. NE welcome that the Applicants have committed to not modelling fish as fleeing receptors and not including mitigation within their models, but would like further clarification from the Applicants that any reference to 'soft start and ramp-up' regarding fish is removed when discussing these mitigation measures. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. Natural England welcomes the Applicant's commitment (stated in 14.4 The Applicant's Response to Deadline 3 Documents) to removing any reference to 'soft start and ramp-up' regarding fish in an updated version of Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology [APP-091], submitted into Examination at Deadline 7.	***Shellfish Ecology*** *[APP-091].* *Information pertaining to soft start procedures has been included for reference only as it relates directly to underwater noise impacts. Previous iterations of the ES did consider fish as fleeing receptors hence the inclusion of wording relating to this mitigation being incorporated into the modelling, however following consultation with stakeholders and regulators they are now considered to be stationary throughout the assessment. No changes to the modelling of UWN impacts on fish and shellfish receptors based on this mitigation measure have been made'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants can confirm any reference to 'soft start and ramp-up' regarding fish will be removed in an updated version of **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091], to be submitted into Examination at Deadline 7. Deadline 8 and End of Examination Position The Applicants can confirm that **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-044] was submitted at Deadline 7 with the removal of reference to 'soft start up and ramp up'. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact' prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-044] for Deadline 9.	
E13	Evidence for habituation has been based on ship/trawl noise and seismic air guns. We advise that habituation should not be taken into account within the assessment without provision of more appropriate supporting evidence for impulsive piling noise.	Deadline 1 & 2: No Change. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England continue to disagree that habituation is applicable to noise sources impacting fish from the Projects. We continue to advise the Applicants provide more appropriate supporting evidence. Please refer to Appendix L for further detail. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England continue to disagree that habituation is applicable to noise sources impacting fish from the Project. We welcome the inclusion of the 135dB threshold in the UWN modelling as requested by Cefas, and we continue to defer to Cefas regarding herring modelling assessment. Whilst we welcome the Applicant has provided additional information on habituation in	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E 28). Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		their response to Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028], this document does not change our previous advice. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. We welcome the response outlined in 14.4 The Applicant's Response to Deadline 3 Documents, and now consider this issue resolved.		
E14	We advise the Applicants commit to additional cable protection mitigation to reduce impacts to herring and sandeel spawning habitat (also mentioned in Risk and Issues Log Points B22 and C12). In addition, the Applicants should explore options to avoid placing cable protection within high – very high potential spawning habitat areas for herring and sandeel in the ECC and array areas. Currently, the full volume/length of cable protection applied for (20% of the ECC length, 10% for the inter-array cables) could be installed within these areas. A commitment should be made to avoid placing cable protection in these areas, or to only a certain proportion of the full volume being allowed in these areas. It should also be demonstrated through the Cable Burial Risk Assessment why the volumes applied for are needed and cannot be refined down further. We consider cable protection estimates should be based on an assessment of likely burial success.	Deadline 1 & 2: No Change. Deadline 3 No Change. Please refer to R& I log B22 and C12 for further detail. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. Deadline 6 No Change - Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to cable protection mitigation. Deadline 7 No Change. No new information has been provided at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E 30): *'The Applicants have not yet developed designs detailing the extents of cable protection required, or its location along the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. Development work is currently ongoing to provide an update on these topics. Any updates that become available during the examination process will be shared with all interested parties and the ExA. It should be noted, however, that the final extents of cable protection to be deployed will not be fully understood until detail design has been completed post-consent and until cable installation is completed'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: B3 and REP3-060: B4). See the response provided for Points B3 and B4 in **Table 3-3**of this document4. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position See end of Examination position provided to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**.	
E15	A commitment should be made to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure within high - very high potential spawning habitat for sandeel and herring at the time of decommissioning, to prevent permanent impacts to spawning areas within the ECC and array areas. We advise this should be secured in the DCO. Without such a commitment, the worst case scenario should assess the impacts to spawning grounds if assets are left permanently	Deadline 1 No Change. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix C2.1 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E 31): *'No decision regarding the final decommissioning policy for the offshore Projects infrastructure including landfall, has yet been made. It is also recognised that legislation and industry best practice change over time. It is likely that offshore projects infrastructure will be removed above the seabed and reused or recycled where practicable. The detail and scope of the decommissioning works will be determined by the relevant legislation and guidance at the time of decommissioning and will be agreed with the regulator. It is anticipated that for the worst case scenario, the impacts will be no greater than those identified for the construction phase.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	in situ. (Also refer to Risk and Issues Log Benthic Point C27)	No Change. Please refer to R& I log B22 and C12 for further detail. Deadline 4 No Change. Please see Appendix C4 of our Deadline 4 submission for further detail. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. Deadline 6 No Change - Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission in relation to cable protection mitigation. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicants have committed [REP6-044] to consider removability of cable protection as part of the development of the final Cable Statement and Decommissioning Programme to be produced for submission to the SoS pre construction. Whilst this is welcome, it is not sufficient to resolve concerns regarding the lack of a full commitment to decommissioning.	*Due to this uncertainty, the assessment of habitat loss at the operation stage is considered as permanent within the impact assessment (section 10.6.2.6. Permanent Loss of Habitat and / or Change in Habitat Type as a Result of Changes in Substrate Composition; (**Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091])'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP2-065:7.2). See the response provided for Point B30 in **Table 3-3** of this document. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point A15 in **Table 3-2**. End of Examination Position See end of Examination provided to Point B7 in **Table 3-3**.	
E16	The behavioural threshold (135 dB) modelled also overlaps the high and very high spawning habitat potential sites when piling in the array areas. As well as seasonal restriction in the ECC, a seasonal restriction should also be committed to for piling in the array areas. We defer to Cefas for further advice on timings of any such restriction.	Deadline 1 & 2: No Change. Deadline 3 No change. Our previous advice remains that the Applicants updates any reference to the worst case scenario from underwater noise impacts on Atlantic herring to behavioural changes with a behavioural threshold of 135 dB SELss. Deadline 4 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E32). Deadline 4 The Applicants direct Natural England to REP3-058: A.10 in Table 2-18 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. *'Underwater noise impact upon sandeel is considered temporary and restricted in spatial extent due to the low sensitivity as defined by Popper et al. (2014). Potential mortality of sandeel may occur in close proximity to monopiling, however population-level effects and subsequent reduction in prey resource for other species is unlikely to occur. This is due to the limited spatial extent of potential mortality effect in relation to the extensive distribution of sandeel habitat within the Central and Southern North Sea. TTS effects are temporary and therefore no long-term effects upon sandeel are predicted.* *The majority of impact pathways for the Projects relating to Atlantic herring spawning grounds occur within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor, with some degree of overlap with the TTS extent for piling activities occurring in the northeastern extent of the potential spawning habitat. Whilst the extent of*	

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		No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. Please see Appendix E6 for further detail. Deadline 7 Issue Progressed. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to DCO conditions related to herring seasonal restrictions for both piling and cable installation to be submitted on a without prejudice basis at Deadline 7. Whilst we will provide full comments at Deadline 8, we are provisionally satisfied that the approach being taken is appropriate and that in-combination with updates to the DCO condition for piling mitigation (see Section 3 of our Deadline 7 Cover Letter), there would be significant reductions in impacts. We acknowledge the Applicant's stance on the use of the 135dB behavioural threshold [REP6-052], but maintain our previous advice [REP6-074] and defers to the MMO's Deadline 6 Response [REP6-069] for further justification on this matter and details surrounding proposed seasonal restrictions.	*TTS is not unusual for piling activities within an offshore wind farm array (~50km), it is noted that there is potential for underwater noise impact to Atlantic herring. Please refer to **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091] for the detailed assessment, noting that the conclusion of the assessment is that these impacts are Not Significant in EIA terms.* *When using the industry standard for assessing the potential for a significant effect from TTS (Popper et al., 2014), the IHLS data shows that the overlapping potential spawning habitat is not highly productive (consistently 1-50 larvae per m² with an isolated sample of 50-200 larvae per m² north of KP90 – refer to Figure 2.7 of the **Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel** [AS-105]). Therefore, the sound produced during piling activities is highly unlikely to result in any significant effect to the North Sea Autumn Spawning Atlantic herring population.* *In light of this finding, which is supported by extensive assessment work, no mitigation is deemed necessary by the Applicants. However, it should be noted that the acoustic envelope assessed is a worst case which may be reduced and refined as the Projects mature. In addition, mitigation may be adopted for other fauna. One or both of these possibilities may be realised which would provide benefits in terms of the reduction of acoustic impacts of the Projects on taxa such as Atlantic herring.* *The Applicants have committed to utilising best endeavours to deliver noise reduction (primary and /or secondary methods) in line with the Department for Environmental Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Policy Paper on Reducing Marine Noise as part of Defra's Marine Noise Package (2025). The additional mitigation measures are presented in section 3.1.9 of the **Outline MMMP (Revision 3)** [REP2-047] and consider the use of Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) as mitigation for underwater noise. Any additional mitigation will be dependent on the final project design and determined at the post-consent sage.* *The provision of underwater noise impact contours where mitigation is incorporated to reduce underwater noise extent by 10dB is presented within the **Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note** [document reference 14.9]. Examination of the mitigated modelling indicates that underwater noise impacts within the 186dB SELcum; 203 dB SELcum; and 207 dB SELcum contours limits any overlap of these impacts to regions either unsuitable for herring spawning, or regions with a spawning potential >0.25, and therefore considered of lower suitability based on the Kyle-Henney et al. (2024) methodology. Within the 135 dB SELss contours, areas of herring spawning potential of a value <0.05-<0.1, and 0.05 (moderate and higher potential) are reduced by 80.91% and 100% respectively following the introduction of mitigation allowing for a 10dB reduction (Table 3-1 **Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note** [document reference 14.9]).* *As originally described within the memo submitted to the MMO dated 2nd November 2023 (see Appendix B of **The Applicant's Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]), the Applicants strongly oppose the use of the 135dB behavioural threshold (which was determined for sprat Sprattus sprattus) for the assessment of potential impacts to Atlantic herring Clupea harengus. Whilst sprat and Atlantic herring are both species within the family Clupeidae, this is not a suitable justification for implementation of this threshold given the evidence presented by Hawkins et al. (2014). The scientific publications upon which this threshold is based (Hawkins and Popper, 2014; Hawkins et al., 2014) **explicitly state that: "these data cannot yet be used to define the sound exposure criteria";** and*	

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			"We would stress, however, that it would be premature to use these data to define sound exposure criteria for sprat and mackerel" *respectively. Therefore, on the evidence of the authors own position, the use of 135dB as a behavioural threshold should not be incorporated into MMO advice for the purposes of EIA. Guidance for impact thresholds is provided within Popper et al. (2014), (published the same year, and noting the common authors between these publications), the underwater noise impact thresholds presented are considered best practice guidance since its publication and are the ones used in the Applicants' assessment (**Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]). However, 135dB limits have been included in all underwater noise modelling outputs produced on request of the Examining Authority.* *The Applicants note that the Rampion 2 development contains and abuts large regions of preferred and marginal Atlantic herring spawning grounds as presented within Figure 8.10 of their EIA. Impacts of underwater noise at the 207dB (mortality and potential mortal injury); 203dB (recoverable injury); and 186dB (temporary threshold shift) levels all overlap significantly with these regions of preferred and marginal potential habitat. Areas of unsuitable habitat are limited across the Fish and Shellfish Study Area as a whole.* *When compared to herring spawning potential associated with the Projects, (Figure 2-1 of the **Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel** [AS-105]) overlap with these regions is greatly reduced. Even in the absence of mitigation, the majority of the region covered by each of the previously discussed thresholds is considered as unsuitable for herring spawning. When considering the suitability of the sediment directly (Figure 2-2 of the **Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel** [AS-105]) findings are similar, with the majority of the region within these noise limits considered to be unsuitable for herring spawning.* *When considering the significant differences in both the proximity and overlap with potential herring spawning grounds between the two projects, it is not considered appropriate for the licence conditions applied to Rampion 2 to be applied to the Deemed Marine Licence(s) in the draft DCO for the Projects.* *For the above reasons, the Applicants do not agree that the proposed restriction is proportionate, evidence-based or necessary.'* <u>Deadline 7</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-074:3): *'Values relating to unmitigated piling extent have been presented in Appendix A of the revised **Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note (Revision 3)** [document reference 14.9] submitted at Deadline 7.* *The 10dB reduction presented within the **Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP5-033] is modelled as a flat broadband reduction. This is due to the exact mitigation to be used not yet being confirmed. This flat broadband 10dB noise reduction has been applied at source for the monopile scenario at the two modelling locations used in the Environmental Statement. Reference to 250Hz is presented only as an example for marine mammals, but does not reflect considerations made for the modelling itself.*	

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			Natural England are correct to identify herring as having a wide frequency sensitivity, greater than most fish species, but unlike most species they are notable for having an ultrasonic adaptation and are sensitive at unusually high frequencies (Lucke et al., 2024). Clupeids are most sensitive at frequencies from approximately 100-800 Hz (Ladich and Fay, 2013). Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) do indeed have a frequency dependence, and when broadband figures are stated (i.e. "10 dB attenuation") this takes into account all frequencies from the noise source under consideration, which in this cate is piling. The attenuation figure is inherently 'weighted' towards the sound frequency where the greatest energy is present, which for piling is around 100Hz. This is why, for example, a bubble curtain's performance is frequently stated as nominally 10dB despite performing in excess of 25dB at frequencies above 500Hz (Bellmann et al. 2020).In the frequency bands where clupeids are most sensitive, which match the frequencies where piling energy is greatest, NAS will generally provide a minimum of 10dB attenuation (Bellmann et al., 2020) and so there is confidence in this figure for herring. It should be noted that the Applicants are including within the ongoing 'without prejudice' discussions, a requirement to carry out further underwater modelling based on the final project design post-consent which will include any agreed mitigation. The wording for this restriction has been agreed with both NE and MMO in email correspondence and has been included in the ***Draft DCO (Revision 10)*** *[document reference 3.1] on a without prejudice basis.'* End of Examination Position See end of Examination position provided in Point E2 of this table.	
E17	Suitable references and evidence should be provided to support statements used in the impact assessment to conclude negligible or minor adverse impacts (i.e. that receptors can recover from impacts within 2-10 years).	Deadline 1 No Change. We are reviewing the Applicants' Responses and will provide further comment at Deadline 2 as needed. Deadline 2 Due to staff absence, Natural England will be providing detailed comments on Fish and Shellfish at Deadline 3. Deadline 3 No Change. Deadline 4, 5 & 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No Change. Natural England and the Applicant maintain their respective positions on this point. We maintain that the ES needs further evidence to	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E 32): *'The Applicants are in process of preparing a change request relating to a number of design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (****Change Notification Letter*** *[PDA-012]). The change proposed of relevance to this comment is the removal of the ESP. Therefore, if the intended change is accepted by the ExA, piling along the Offshore Export Cable Corridor would be removed from all construction scenarios. As piling at the Offshore Export Cable Corridor would no longer considered, concurrent monopiling within the Array Areas would represent the worst case scenario in regards to impacts associated within underwater noise (Table 10-1;* ***Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology*** *[APP-091]). Ranges for pin-piling would be considered as no greater than that presented within the assessment…'* See full response in Natural **England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E6). Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: E17): *The Applicants maintain the position as detailed in RR-039: E 6 of the Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations (including Appendices A - F, and I) [AS-048], repeated below for convenience:* *'Recovery period is one of a number of factors used in the determination of magnitude (alongside likelihood, and variation from background). Magnitude has been considered alongside sensitivity (which*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		support ES conclusions, however we defer to MMO/Cefas for further comment on this matter.	*itself is determined based on a number of factors) for the determination of impact and potential significance.* *The justification for recovery periods is provided within the 'magnitude' section of each impact assessed and may be determined using references and evidence where available, alongside expert judgement to contextualise this potential magnitude.* *Prescriptive recovery periods for recovery of fish and shellfish populations to the impacts assessed within the ES are rarely, if ever available due to the extent of development-specific factors that must be considered on a case-by-case basis when undertaking offshore EIAs. In many cases the 2-10 year recovery period that makes up one part of the determination of magnitude is conservative to account for this uncertainty.'* *The Applicants note that despite Natural England stating 'no change' in the Risks and Issues Log at Deadline 3 forwards on this matter, no further advice from Natural England has been received on this matter since the Applicants provided a response in RR-039: E 6 of the Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations (including Appendices A - F, and I) [AS-048].* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants maintain the position stated above.	
E18	Indirect effects on Humber Estuary SAC river lamprey and sea lamprey should be screened into the assessment.	<u>Deadline 1</u> No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. <u>Deadline 2 & End of Examination Deadline</u> Natural England maintain that river lamprey and sea lamprey should be screened into the assessment, however we acknowledge that the uncertainties and data poor environment would prevent a reliable assessment being made.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E 32): *'The Applicants note that this potential pathway for LSE was not raised in previous consultations held for **Appendix A - Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening** [APP-049], when the document was issued in December 2022 for initial review or when the report was issued for further review alongside the Projects Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) in 2023.* *With regards to the potential for indirect effects on river lamprey and sea lamprey for prey species, given the uncertainty regarding these species movements within the marine environment (as noted in RR-039: E37), assessing specific locations favoured by river and sea lamprey for feeding is not possible.* *River lamprey is restricted to coastal waters preying on a variety of other species (Canal & River Trust, 2022). Although there is potential for effects of the Projects to impact upon prey of this species this could only occur in coastal waters within which there is limited infrastructure (and greatest potential for impact during temporary construction activities). Sea lamprey are found across the North Sea (OSPAR, 2009) and parasite other fish species including shad, herring, pollock, salmon, mullets, cod, haddock, basking sharks (OSPAR, 2009). Sea lamprey and their prey could therefore interact with any number of industries and activities across the North Sea. Given the wide range of prey types, determining any source-pathway-receptor relationship specific to the Projects is not possible for either species.* *Given this, the Applicants believe the conclusions of no significant effect on fish species reached in **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091] can be used as the basis to determine that there is no potential for impacts to preferred prey availability'.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position stated above.	
E19	The worst case piling event for migratory fish species is likely to be when piling takes place in the ECC. Underwater noise impacts from piling in the ECC should be fully assessed for Annex II migratory fish.	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 3 Issue Resolved. Natural England no longer deems this an issue due to the removal of the need for piling in the ECC. Deadline 4 & End of Examination Deadline Issue Resolved. Natural England no longer deems this an issue due to the removal of the need for piling in the ECC.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E35). Deadline 5 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
E20	The cumulative assessment for Dogger Bank SAC should be updated to include the total habitat loss within the SAC, including loss occurring within any overlap of the ECCs with the site. See also E19 and E22 in relation to the total habitat loss area to be assessed.	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 3 Issue Resolved. Natural England no longer deems this an issue due to the removal of the need for piling in the ECC. Deadline 4 No Change. Please see Appendix L for more detail on providing updated habitat loss assessments.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E36): '*The 34.85% area stated in **Appendix B Sandeel Habitat Potential in the Dogger Bank SAC and Southern North Sea SAC** [APP-050] represents the percentage of high potential sandeel spawning habitats within the array area boundaries for all offshore wind farms in planning or consented within the Dogger Bank SAC. As noted in paragraph 24 of the report however, the affected habitat (i.e. within the footprint of seabed infrastructure or temporary disturbance to habitat will occur during construction and maintenance activities) within these areas will be significantly lower than the overall extent of the combined array areas.* *As detailed in **Appendix B Sandeel Habitat Potential in the Dogger Bank SAC and Southern North Sea SAC** [APP-050], based on the publicly available information for the schemes listed an area of approximately 11.71km² may be permanently lost within the Dogger Bank SAC. It is noted that parts of the export cable corridors of all projects also cross the SAC, however given the actual footprint of infrastructure is much smaller than the consented boundaries and most of the export cable corridors will have no above surface infrastructure, these corridors have not been included within this calculation.* *However, as mentioned in RR-039: E 3, the Applicants are in the process of preparing a change request*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Please see Appendix E5 for further detail. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. The Applicant has presented an assessment of ecological halo effects [REP5-041]. However, we consider that the estimate for worst case area of loss needs further revision. Please see Appendix C6 of Natural England's Deadline 6 submission for further details. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*relating to a number of design parameters. The change request will be supported by the* ***Project Change Request 1 – Environmental Assessment Update*** *[document reference C1.1], in which the Applicants will propose to reduce the number of Offshore Platforms from eight to three and reduce the overall length of cabling within the Array Areas. Such changes would lead to a subsequent reduction in area of foundations. scour protection, cable protection measures and cable / pipeline crossings. If accepted by the ExA, this would reduce the total habitat loss within the Dogger Bank SAC resulting from the Projects from 2.25km² to 1.9km², an approximately 17% decrease in area of habitat loss. As such, the overall potential habitat loss from all wind farms within the Dogger Bank SAC would be reduced to 11.36km². It is expected that the change request will be submitted to the ExA in early January 2025 following targeted consultation.* *As noted in the* ***Appendix B Sandeel Habitat Potential in the Dogger Bank SAC and Southern North Sea SAC*** *[APP-050], the potential figure of habitat loss within the Dogger Bank SAC did not include Dogger Bank D as no detailed information on the project's footprint was available at the time of writing time'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants direct Natural England to REP3-058: A12 in Table 2-11 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: E20): *'It is important to note that the updated Reach et al. (2024) methodology differs from the previous Latto et al. (2013) methodology in that heat scores are no longer categorised as 'very high', 'high', 'medium', 'low', and 'no potential', but are instead assessed against a continuous scale. However, heat scores of <0.05 are generally considered to be of highest potential for supporting habitat. Heat scores > 0.1 are considered of lower potential.* *For heat scores <0.05, the total percentage area of the Dogger Bank SAC is ~7.91%, of which the DBS East and DBS West Array Areas (i.e. the boundaries not the footprint within them) represent ~1.59% and ~0.22% respectively.* *For heat scores between 0.05-<0.1, the total percentage area of the Dogger Bank SAC is ~55.94%, of which the DBS East and DBS West Array Areas represent ~2.70% and ~9.12% respectively.* *For heat scores between 0.1-<0.25, the total percentage area of the Dogger Bank SAC is ~35.36%, of which the DBS East and DBS West Array Areas represent ~11.81% and ~0.033% respectively.* *The remaining heat scores >0.25 are considered low-no confidence as potential supporting habitat for sandeel and represent ~0.79% of the Dogger Bank SAC's extent.* *distribution of potential supporting habitat within the Dogger Bank SAC, however it is clear that they do not represent a significant majority of each heat score within the wider Dogger Bank SAC. When considering that habitat disturbance footprint will be orders of magnitude smaller in scale than the total Array Area, the conclusions made within* ***Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology*** *[APP-091] and subsequent supporting documentation (including the* ***Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel*** *[AS-105]) remain valid.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			For completeness, the same information regarding the overlap of the DBS East and West Arrays with potential supporting habitat for sandeel within the Southern North Sea SAC is presented below: *For heat scores <0.05, the total percentage area of the Southern North Sea SAC is ~10.77%, of which the DBS East and DBS West Array Areas represent ~0.53% and ~0.075% respectively.* *For heat scores between 0.05-<0.1, the total percentage area of the Southern North Sea SAC is ~36.16%, of which the DBS East and DBS West Array Areas represent ~0.90% and ~3.05% respectively.* *For heat scores between 0.1-<0.25, the total percentage area of the Southern North Sea SAC is ~46.02%, of which the DBS East and DBS West Array Areas represent ~3.94% and ~0.011% respectively.* *The remaining heat scores >0.25 are considered low-no confidence as potential supporting habitat for sandeel and represent ~7.05% of the Southern North Sea SAC's extent.* *Considering the above, the DBS East and West Array Areas represent a small proportion of the distribution of potential supporting habitat within the Southern North Sea SAC. It is clear that they do not represent a significant majority of each heat score within the wider Southern North Sea SAC. When considering that habitat disturbance footprint will be orders of magnitude smaller in scale than the total Array Areas, the conclusions made within* ***Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology*** *[APP-091] and subsequent supporting documentation (including the* ***Heat Mapping Report: Atlantic Herring and Sandeel*** *[AS-105]) remain valid.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:20): *'On a without prejudice basis, the Applicants have provided revised halo effect footprint estimates in* ***Appendix E Ecological Halo Effects Technical Note (Revision 2)*** *[document reference 15.7] submitted at Deadline 7.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants remain of the opinion that halo effects should not be considered as habitat loss. However, to allow decision making by the Secretary of State the Applicants have provided updated estimates of habitat loss (including potential Halo effects) on a without prejudice basis based on Natural England's comments in the in Table 6-7 of **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] submitted at Deadline 7. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-016] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
E21	We disagree that if there were no significant impacts identified for potential fish prey species in the EIA assessment then there would be no significant impacts on ornithology and marine mammal receptors. NE consider that an understanding of the relative importance of the Project site as a foraging area, and potential for any impacts on localised prey abundance and distribution is critical in framing the predicted RIAA impacts that can be quantified. Further assessment is therefore needed to understand how more localised impacts (e.g. localised depletion and/or reduced resilience of the wider stock) on fish and shellfish might influence prey availability for designated seabirds and mammals. The assessments should consider both direct and indirect impact pathways to sandeel and herring at a biologically relevant population scale, for both the construction and operation phases of the Projects. For herring this would be the Banks spawning component of the North Sea stock, and for sandeel the specific genetic population present in the Project area. See Annex E1 of REP-039 for further guidance.	<u>Deadline 1</u> No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. <u>Deadline 2</u> No change. We note the Applicants have contested the importance of the Dogger Bank sandbank system for prey availability and foraging species. Natural England disagrees with the justification provided and therefore maintains the advice provided in our Relevant Representation [AS-048] on this issue. <u>Deadline 3</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline <u>Deadline 4</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline <u>Deadline 5</u> No Change. Please see Appendix E5 for further detail. <u>Deadline 6</u> No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 7</u> Issue Progressed. Natural England welcome the Applicant's updates to the Effects on Prey Species Technical note [REP6-050]. We have provided further advice on this impact pathway in response to RIES questions 32, 46, 52,53 in Appendix N7 of our Deadline 7 submission.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E4): *'Indirect effects to predators such as marine mammals due to changes to prey have been assessed in sections 11.6.1.7 and 11.6.2.6 of **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals** [APP-095]. Due to the wide foraging ranges of marine mammals the significance was assessed as negligible or minor adverse, therefore Not Significant in EIA terms…'* See full response in **Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E4). <u>Deadline 4</u> The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP2-069:C10). See the response provided for Point C10 in **Table 3-4** of this document. <u>Deadline 6</u> The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 for Point C11 of Table 3-4and REP5-056: E4.1 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] is reiterated below: *'The Applicants acknowledge the important link between harbour porpoise distribution, ranges and feeding grounds with the main prey species being sandeels and clupeids. Distribution of harbour porpoises is thought to be prey driven and it is likely that the high densities of harbour porpoises that occur at the Dogger Bank are due to a particularly rich area for feeding (Ransijn et al. 2021**Error! Bookmark not defined.**). Important harbour porpoise prey also includes cod (Gadus morhua), whiting (Merlangius merlangus) and sprat (Sprattus sprattus). Sprats are also high in fat, therefore a good quality of prey. All of these prey species are present within the wider Dogger Bank area and Southern North Sea.* *A southward shift in distribution of harbour porpoise is supported by data from smaller scale surveys in the Southern North Sea which show increasing numbers of porpoises and aggregations in French, Belgian, Dutch and German waters (e.g., Gilles et al. 2011, 2016; Haelters et al. 2011; Scheidat et al. 2012; Peschko et al. 2016; Laran et al. 2017; Nachtsheim et al. 2021). This shift in harbour porpoise distribution is probably related to changes in prey distribution and abundance (Hammond et al. 2013). Data from SCANS-III in 2016 and the recent SCANS-IV survey in 2022 confirm that the shift to the south has been maintained (Hammond et al. 2021; Gilles et al. 2023).* *There is already a documented shift in harbour porpoise distribution likely due to prey availability. As such, the Applicants maintain their position that the Projects effects are not likely significant impacts as part of the comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment that has been undertaken.* *The Applicants note that Natural England's comment does not include any further request to amend the assessment or advice on additional information required. No updates are therefore proposed to be made to the assessments.'*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-077:20): *'The Applicants direct Natural England to the updated **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049], submitted at Deadline 6, which presents further details on the Applicants' position that there will be no significant impacts on fish prey species resulting from the Projects.'* Deadline 8 The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 7 Documents** [document reference 18.3]. End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain that the information presented in the updated **Chapter 9 Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2)** [REP7-038] and **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049] ensures this matter has been fully considered within the ES and that sufficient evidence has been provided to Natural England to close this matter. The Applicants highlight that the assessment of effects on prey was undertaken in line with best practice as per consented offshore wind farms. The assessment rational and results are set out in the **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049].	
E22	The Applicants have proposed pre- and post-construction habitat sampling to validate statements made regarding habitat suitability and recoverability for sandeel. We advise that longer-term sandeel monitoring would provide a more robust evidence base and would be beneficial in assessing the impacts of the Project on Dogger Bank sandeel populations (e.g. changes in sediment composition that could arise from dispersing drill spoil or settling of sediments suspended by cable laying). Once assessments have been updated, monitoring should be secured via the In-Principal Monitoring Plan to determine whether the residual impacts are as predicted. This could be via provision of a post-consent Sandeel Monitoring Plan, or the inclusion of sandeel specific objectives in the Benthic Monitoring Plan.	Deadline 1 Natural England will be providing comments on the In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) [APP-247] at Deadline 3, in order to take into account all of the Natural England will be providing comments on the In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) [APP-247] at Deadline 3, in order to take into account all of the updates from Change Request 1, the Defra Marine Noise Policy paper and updated ornithology assessments. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline Deadline 4 Please refer to Appendix J regarding Natural England's advice regarding the IPMP.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E40): '*The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The approach to pre- and post-construction monitoring will be confirmed in detailed plans which will be prepared in accordance with the **In- Principle Monitoring Plan** [APP-247]. The exact details of the monitoring to be undertaken will be agreed post-consent, in consultation with the MMO and Natural England'.* Deadline 4 The Applicants direct Natural England to REP3-056: A.10 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. '*The detailed information requested by Natural England will be provided in the post consent monitoring plan and developed in consultation with Natural England as the relevant SNCB. The framework approach secured by the IPMP enables the post-consent offshore monitoring plan to be informed by latest available information, such as detailed design of the Project and emerging monitoring results from other relevant projects, where possible.* *The sampling design should be informed by the final Project design (i.e. number of turbines and location in relation to habitat types) to ensure that the survey covers any variation (in ecology, depth, sediment conditions) across the Array Areas.* *Detailed hypotheses will be provided in the final Offshore Monitoring Plan. These will target the likely significant effects and reasons for monitoring set out in the **IPMP (Revision 3)** [document reference*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix E - Fish and Shellfish	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 5 & 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No Change. No new information has been provided at this deadline.	*8.23]. The Applicants therefore consider that the IPMP is appropriate in this regard and notes that the format and level of detail provided is consistent with that provided by other consented offshore wind farms at the equivalent stage.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position stated at Deadline 4 above and note that the **IPMP (Revision 5)** [REP7-115] contains the provision for pre-and post-construction monitoring in order to demonstrate any effects in habitat suitability from the construction of the Projects. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **IPMP (Revision 5)** [REP7-115] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
E23	We acknowledge that herring and sandeel are not designated features and therefore derogations for direct impacts to these species would not be required. However, should impacts to these species contribute to an adverse effect on site integrity for designated predator species or Annex 1 sandbank feature, consideration of prey availability/spawning habitat may need to be incorporated into compensation measures for those sites.	Deadline 1 No Change. No Action needed. Deadline 7 Please see Natural England's responses to RIES questions Q52 and Q53 in Appendix N7 of our Deadline 7 submission.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: E4) regarding the indirect effects on prey species for marine mammals and offshore ornithology. End of Examination Position The Applicants have provided **Appendix C Review of Evidence on Recovery of Sandbank Habitat Following Habitat Damage (Revision 2)** of the **RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5)** [REP7-017]. The Applicants' evidence on the recoverability of sediment communities in the Dogger Bank SAC come from several sources: • The biotopes recorded in the site-specific surveys are all stated to have high (full recovery within two years) or medium (full recovery within 2 – 10 years) recovery rates, using the MarESA sensitivity criteria which are supported by JNCC and Natural England. • Evidence from site specific survey from offshore wind developments within the SAC demonstrate rapid recovery from construction effects (see **Annex B – Dogger Bank B UXO crater survey results**) and recovery from longer-term operational effects (see **Appendix 8-2 Met Mast Survey Analysis** [APP-083]) • Evidence from industry studies of recovery of habitats. • UK Government studies which describe the sandy habitats characteristic of the Dogger Bank as being typified by fauna that are adapted to high rates of mortality and natural disturbance . In conclusion, the Applicants maintain the position that given the evidence for recovery, the situation for habitat damage in the Dogger Bank SAC is no different from that of Hornsea Project Three and the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC, or Norfolk Boreas and Norfolk Vanguard Projects and the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC. Habitat damage therefore should not contribute to the conclusion of AEoI for the Dogger Bank SAC sandbank feature.	

3.7 Marine Mammals

Table 3-7 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Marine Mammals

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
F1	The Applicants have committed to no concurrent monopile installation between the Offshore Export Cable Corridor (ECC) and the Project array areas; however, it is unclear if there could be concurrent pin pile installation in the ECC with monopile installation in the array areas. Clarity is needed on the WCS for concurrent piling between the ECC and array areas.	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England no longer deems this an issue due to the removal of the need for piling in the ECC.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 8). Deadline 4 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
F2	Clarity is needed on how the worst case scenario (WCS) for the maximum number of piles to be installed concurrently in 24 hours across the two arrays will be secured in the dMLs for the separate Projects.	Deadline 1 Natural England welcomes that a condition has been added to the DCO and will be providing comments at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment on this issue when our DCO comments are provided. Deadline 3 Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 4. Deadline 4 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England are satisfied that the condition wording captures the WCS as assessed in the original ES which was then reduced as a result of the change request.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 9). Deadline 5 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
F3	Clarity is needed on the WCS for simultaneous piling across the two arrays in a concurrent build out scenario, and how the dMLs for the separate Projects will secure this.	Deadline 1 Natural England welcomes that a condition has been added to the DCO and will be providing comments at Deadline 2.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 10). Deadline 5	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 2 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment on this issue when our DCO comments are provided. Deadline 3 Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 4. Deadline 4 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England are satisfied that the condition wording captures the WCS as assessed in the original ES which was then reduced as a result of the change request.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
F4	Permanent Threshold Shift (PTS) should be scoped into the Cumulative Effects Assessment. We do not agree that the mitigation outlined in the MMMP and ES is sufficient to minimise the risk of injury for all PTS impact ranges (see below). Further, due to the nature of marine mammals mitigation cannot guarantee that no animals will be at risk of PTS.	Deadline 1 No Change. Deadline 2 No Change. Natural England maintain our advice provided at Relevant Representations [AS-048]. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England maintain our advice provided at Relevant Representations [AS-048]. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England maintain our advice provided at Relevant Representations. Deadline 5 No change. The Applicant has acknowledged that in line with Defra Guidance, all offshore wind farms are required to use primary and/or secondary noise management measures, and this will mitigate any risk of cumulative Permanent Threshold Shift. However, the Applicant will also not commit to delivering additional primary or secondary mitigation, despite currently being unable to mitigate their full injury zone. Natural England maintain our advice that	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F16): *'The Applicants acknowledge that with the current Maximum Design Parameters, additional mitigation measures may be needed to fully mitigate the risk of PTS. The Applicants acknowledge that there needs to be effective and appropriate mitigation measures in place to ensure no auditory injury (PTS) takes place from the Projects and is committed to this requirement. Other projects would also need effective mitigation measures in place to ensure there is no PTS, therefore with all projects using mitigation measures to eliminate PTS, there would be no potential Cumulative Effects of PTS.* *As a precautionary approach, PTS numbers were included in the population modelling for the cumulative assessment, so while not looked at individually, the potential impact has been given consideration in the significance of effect at a cumulative level.* *The Applicants are considering the use of NAS as mitigation for underwater noise, and the use of it will be dependent on the final project design and determined at the post-consent stage. NAS is being included within the Projects' procurement strategy as an optional element to allow it to be called upon should it be required based on the final design parameters'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants maintain their position regarding this matter. Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F4): *'Defra have recently published their Marine Noise package, which provides a suite of new and updated policy and guidance relating to the reduction and mitigation of underwater sound, in particular the Defra noise policy (2025)[31] which states that 'all offshore wind pile driving activity across all English waters will*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		additional mitigation should be committed to. See Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 Natural England welcomes that PTS impacts have been included in the RIAA [REP5-010], however we disagree with the assessment conclusions and that mitigation has been appropriately secured. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 Issue progressed. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation. However, mitigation cannot guarantee that no animals will be at risk of PTS and we therefore maintain that PTS should be included in the CEA screening. We understand that the Applicant will be submitting an updated Chapter 11-Marine Mammals [APP-095] at Deadline 7. We will provide further comment at Deadline 8.	*be required to demonstrate that they have utilised best endeavours to deliver noise reductions through the use of primary and/or secondary noise reduction methods in the first instance'. Therefore, all offshore wind farms are required to use primary and / or secondary noise management measures, and this will mitigate any risk of cumulative Permanent Threshold Shift. The Applicants consider with the new guidance in place, this issue can be resolved.'* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F4): *'As noted in the Applicants' response to Natural England's Appendix F5 Table 1.1 (I.D. 1)* ***the Draft DCO (Revision 9)*** *[document reference 3.1] (see Schedule 10 and 11, Condition 15 (1)(g); and Schedule 12 and 13, Condition 13 (1)(g)) submitted at Deadline 5 now includes provision for primary and /or secondary mitigation in the event that driven or part-driven pile foundations are proposed to be used which will be secured through the final MMMP. The Applicants are engaging with Natural England on the condition wording submitted.'* Deadline 8 The Applicants can confirm that **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals (Revision 2**) [REP7-045] was submitted at Deadline 7. PTS numbers for all assessed projects were included in the population modelling for the cumulative assessment, so while not reported as an individual impact, the potential effect has been given consideration in the significance of effect of underwater noise at a cumulative level. The potential risk of PTS from other OWF projects has been incorporated in the cumulative disturbance assessment using population modelling (iPCoD). However, the Applicants consider PTS is to be localised to each project with regard to the modelled impact ranges. Effects would be mitigated with the measures secured in the In Principle SIP and the Outline MMMP, which will be further developed post-consent and pre-construction and with consideration of the latest guidance (JNCC *et al.*, 2025). The Projects are committed to additional mitigation to ensure that the potential PTS effects would be fully mitigated by using primary measures through project design and/or secondary measures through noise reduction methods such as NAS and to ensure there is no residual PTS after the ADD use. Furthermore, all other projects that were screened-in for an overlap in piling, committed to mitigate PTS with measures detailed in their respective MMMPs. End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider sufficient measures are in place to ensure there is no residual PTS. A full assessment based on the final Projects design and incorporated mitigation measures (as will be agreed through the final MMMP) will be undertaken for potential PTS or disturbance effects to support the Marine Wildlife Licence application. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals (Revision 2**) [REP7-045]	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	
F5	Natural England have reviewed the Underwater Noise Modelling Report and have no comments to make. However, we defer to Cefas for detailed comments on the methodology undertaken.	Deadline 1 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 & End of Examination Position No change. Natural England defer to Cefas on the UWN methodology.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F17): '*The Applicants acknowledge this comment'.*	
F6	The maximum predicted PTS impact range for a single pile installation is 13 km for harbour porpoise and 26 km for minke whales. These distances are too large to effectively be mitigated by Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs). The Applicants needs to demonstrate how the full PTS impact range will be mitigated to ensure no injury is caused to marine mammals. Alternatively, the PTS impact range needs to be reduced to ensure ADDs can effectively deter animals from the zone of injury within 80 minutes (maximum PTS range will need to be 7.2 km for harbour porpoise and 15.6 km for minke whale). This could be achieved my reducing the maximum hammer energy in the Project envelope, or by committing to the use of NAS to reduce the sound at source.	Deadline 1 The Defra Marine Noise Policy paper was published on 21st January 2025. Natural England is reviewing this in terms of what it means for our advice on this project. We will provide further comment on the relevant Outline MMMP and Draft In Principle SIP updates at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix F2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England's advice remains that The Applicants should be committing to using Noise Abatement Systems at this stage in the application. See Appendix F3 for further detail. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England's advice remains that The Applicant should be committing to using Noise Abatement Systems at this stage in the application. See Appendix F4 for further detail. Deadline 5	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 18). Deadline 3 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-067:3.1) Deadline 4 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F6). Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F6). Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-075:1): '*The Applicants have amended the condition wording regarding noise reduction to the following at Deadline 7:* *(g) in the event that driven or part-driven pile foundations are proposed to be used, a marine mammal mitigation protocol (in accordance with the outline marine mammal mitigation protocol), the intention of which is to prevent injury to marine mammals, following current best practice as advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies and which must include details of noise reduction methods through project design (primary measures) and/or, deployment of noise mitigation systems or noise abatement systems (secondary measures) that will be utilised to manage sounds from those piling activities and such protocol must include full details and justification for the mitigation chosen or excluded for deployment.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No change. Natural England welcomes the submission of the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 4, and agrees that were a 10dB noise reduction to be applied, the full PTS impact range could be mitigated via ADDs. However, the Applicant has not committed to delivering this reduction. We advise the Applicant to commit to reducing the estimated noise by 10dB via primary and/or secondary mitigation, with the exact methods to be deployed determined post-consent. See Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England acknowledges the updates to the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 5, however our Deadline 5 advice remains regarding commitments to primary and/or secondary mitigation. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation. Whilst the Applicant has not committed to specific level of noise reduction in dB, we are satisfied that the assessment provided in [REP5-033] has demonstrated that mitigation could be applied to reduce the injury zone to a level that could be fully mitigated with ADD usage of less than 80 minutes for all species. We therefore consider this issue resolved.	*The Applicants have agreed this wording with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 respectively in order to enable Natural England to confirm there is no adverse effects on site integrity (AEoI) on the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) from the Projects.* *To ensure these measures are also appropriate to reduce potential effects for the updated assessment on the Wash and North Norfolk Coast (WNNC) SAC, updates have been made to illustrate the mitigated impact ranges in Illustrative Underwater Noise Technical Note (Revision 3) [document reference 14.9] submitted at Deadline 7. Natural England confirmed via email on 20th June 2025 that they anticipate this matter to be resolved at Deadline 8 and no AEoI for WNNC SAC to be concluded.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved.	
F7	The predicted maximum injury zone for some UXO clearance events is larger than the area for many ADDs to effectively deter marine mammals from. Provide planned ADD durations to demonstrate that the maximum injury zone for UXO clearance	Deadline 1 As part of the Defra Marine Noise Policy paper that was published on 21st January 2025, an updated Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Joint Position	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 20). Deadline 3	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	can be mitigated. If this is not possible, additional mitigation or methods to reduce the sound at source should be investigated.	Statement was published. Natural England is reviewing this in terms of what it means for our advice on this project. We will provide further comment on the relevant Outline MMMP and Draft In Principle SIP updates at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix F2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 Issue resolved. Natural England welcomes the Applicant's updates to the outline MMMP to include low order methods as default for UXO removal, and to use NAS where high order is unavoidable. Natural England advises that UXO clearance with and without additional mitigation measures including ADD durations, are presented in the final UXO clearance MMMP and UXO clearance Marine Licence Application.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided for Point F6 in **Table 3-7** of this document. Deadline 4 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-069: F7). Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	
F8	Natural England supports increasing the Monitoring Area (MA) to ensure it is greater than the maximum predicted impact range for PTS. Consideration should be given to how this zone can be effectively monitored to ensure all marine mammals can be detected. This may require using more marine mammal observers (MMObs) and implementing stricter limits on workable weather conditions. The MMMP should be updated as needed.	Deadline 1 The Defra Marine Noise Policy paper was published on 21st January 2025. Natural England is reviewing this in terms of what it means for our advice on this project. We will provide further comment on the relevant Outline MMMP and Draft In Principle SIP updates at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No change. See Appendix F2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. Deadline 3	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F21). Deadline 3 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP3-060: F7). Deadline 4 The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F8). Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F8).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No Change. Whilst Natural England welcomes the demonstrated impact reductions outlined in the Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note [REP4-094], we advise that this reduction in noise is committed to, and then included in updated modelling and the MMMP. Please see Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England acknowledges the updates to the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 5, however our Deadline 5 advice remains regarding commitments to primary and/or secondary mitigation. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation, and that the assessment provided in [REP5-033] has demonstrated that mitigation could be applied to reduce the injury zone to a level that could be monitored. We therefore consider this issue resolved.	Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point F6 in **Table 3-7** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved.	
F9	The MA needs to be monitored for a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the ADD activation to reduce the risk of injury to marine mammals from the ADD. This should be updated in the MMMP.	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide comment on the Outline MMMP at Deadline 2.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 22). Deadline 3	

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		Deadline 2 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England has reviewed the updates made to [AS-101] Outline MMMP and are satisfied this issue has been addressed.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
F10	Piling should not commence (or recommence) in poor visibility or hours of darkness where Marine Mammal Observers (MMOb) cannot be used. There are limitations to Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) so it should be used as well as, rather than instead of MMOb to optimise the ability to detect marine mammals and provide the best mitigation. Update Outline MMMP.	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide comment on the Outline MMMP at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No Change. Please refer to Appendix F2 regarding our comments on the updated Outline MMMP. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England can only agree to piling during reduced visibility / darkness if the Applicants can demonstrate that the Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) equipment can cover the whole Mitigation Area (MA). See Appendix F3 for further detail. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England can only agree to piling during reduced visibility / darkness if the Applicant can demonstrate that the Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) equipment can cover the whole Mitigation Area (MA). See Appendix F3 for further detail. Deadline 5 No Change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. Deadline 6 No Change. Please see Natural England's response to question R17.40 issued in the Rule 17 letter dated 9th June 2025, provided in our Deadline 6 Cover Letter. Deadline 7 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F23): *'The JNCC PAM guidance (2023), states that PAM can be used during hours of darkness: 'PAM should be used when environmental conditions prevent visual observations by the marine mammal observer (MMObs); in some circumstances, it may also be needed to supplement visual observations (i.e. both methods are employed at the same time'; 'However, it is acknowledged it is the only method regularly used at night'.* *If the Projects require piling in poor visibility or at nighttime, a suitable method of PAM will be utilised to ensure full coverage of the monitoring area which is in line with the JNCC PAM guidance (2023). The JNCC PAM Guidance (2023) will be referenced in the **Outline MMMP (Revision 2)** [document reference: 8.25] which will be submitted in late November 2024'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]) (REP2-067:2.1): *'In paragraph 110, of the **Outline MMMP (Revision 3)** [REP2-047] states that "the PAM equipment would be appropriate to detect vocalising cetaceans in the monitoring area (MA). Details on the PAM equipment to be used will be confirmed post consent and consulted on as part of the final MMMP. Other options such as night vison binoculars and infrared cameras will also be considered if required. All approved mitigation measures and piling protocols will be presented in the final MMMP and approved by the MMO".'* Deadline 4 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F10): *'In Paragraph 110, of the Outline MMMP (Revision 4) [document reference: 8.25] submitted at Deadline 4, it states that 'the PAM equipment would be appropriate to detect vocalising cetaceans in the monitoring area'. Details on the PAM equipment to be used will be confirmed post consent and consulted on as part of the final MMMP. Other options such as night vision binoculars, infrared cameras and any new emerging technologies will also be considered if required. All approved mitigation measures and piling protocols will be agreed through consultation and presented in the final MMMP and all PAM operations will be in line with the JNCC guidance for the use of Passive Acoustic Monitoring (2023).'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-071: R17.40):	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			'The Applicants are committed to ensuring the monitoring area (MA) is fully mitigated with the use of Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) during hours of darkness and reduced visibility, as stated in section 3.1.2 in the ***Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (MMMP) (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 8.25]. Therefore, the Applicants will consider PAM methods that would have a good signal to noise ratio (i.e. the ratio of signal amplitude (marine mammal vocalisation) to amplitude of ambient sound), with capabilities of detecting all vocalising marine mammals. The various types of real time monitoring PAM equipment that the Applicants could consider deploying are, but not limited to, static PAM buoy(s) within the MA, a Modular buoy or a PAM smart buoy. Other PAM methods that could be considered are using an unmanned surface vessel (USV) with towed PAM (AutoNauto).* *Using this type of PAM equipment could provide a better coverage of the full MA if required. The Applicants will confirm the PAM method and equipment in the final MMMP post consent, based on the requirements of the Projects final design parameters, noise reduction measures and updated underwater noise modelling taking into account consideration of new impact ranges and any updates to the guidelines for mitigation measures for piling.'* <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants consider that through the finalisation of the MMMP post consent and in line with requirement to apply primary and/or secondary noise reduction measures, that the MA based on the final Projects design will be reduced and the capability is available to fully mitigate using PAM during hours of darkness or low visibility.	
F11	Natural England does not agree that the mitigated impacts of Permanent Threshold Shift (PTS) from piling are minor adverse - negligible for all marine mammals (See F5-F7). These conclusions are hinged on mitigation outlined in the MMMP which is not currently sufficient to fully mitigate the predicted PTS impacts. To ensure the impacts from underwater noise caused by piling are reduced for marine mammals we advise that the sound is reduced at source, this could be by modifying the design envelope (e.g. reducing the maximum hammer energy) or by using Noise Abatement Systems.	<u>Deadline 1</u> The Defra Marine Noise Policy paper was published on 21st January 2025. Natural England is reviewing this in terms of what it means for our advice on this project. We will provide further comment on the relevant Outline MMMP and Draft In Principle SIP updates at Deadline 2. <u>Deadline 2</u> No change. See Appendix F2 of Natural England's Deadline 2 submission for further detail. <u>Deadline 3</u> No Change. See Appendix F3 for further detail regarding Noise Abatement Systems. <u>Deadline 4</u> No Change. See Appendix F3 for further detail regarding Noise Abatement Systems.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F24): *'In table 11-41 of* ***Chapter 11 Marine Mammals*** *[APP-095] the significance of effect was minor adverse for permanent changes in hearing sensitivity (PTS) from single and cumulative piling of monopiles and jacket pin piles (without mitigation) for bottlenose dolphin, common dolphin, and white beaked dolphin, and harbour seal (harbour seal for the Projects in isolation only) for the Projects. For harbour porpoise, minke whale and grey seal the significance of effect was assessed as major adverse for the Projects in Isolation and together for cumulative PTS ranges for single and sequential piling of monopiles and jacket pin piles.* *The Applicants consider that as the residual effect equates to a minor adverse significance in the Projects' assessment with a pre-piling search using trained MMObs and PAM will provide the best chance of ensuring marine mammals are outside the initial injury zone. The use of acoustic deterrent devices (ADD) will also deter animals and will reduce the impact. The residual effect past the range of the ADD used for mitigation is likely to reduce the significance of effect. However additional methods that will be presented in the* ***Outline MMMP (Revision 2)*** *[document reference: 8.25] (submitted in late November 2024) such as sound reduction at the source may be utilised to reduce the significance of effect. The mitigation requirements will be dependent on the final project design and determined at the post-consent stage in the finalisation of the MMMP and prior to the Marine Wildlife Licence application.*	

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		Deadline 5 No Change. Whilst Natural England welcomes the demonstrated impact reductions outlined in the Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note [REP4-094], we advise that this reduction in noise is committed to and then reflected in updated ES documents as needed. See Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England acknowledges the updates to the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 5, however our Deadline 5 advice remains regarding commitments to primary and/or secondary mitigation. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 Issue Progressed. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation. The Applicant has indicated in their Response to the Deadline 5 documents [REP6-052] that updates to Chapter 11 Marine Mammals [APP-095] will be submitted at Deadline 7 to incorporate primary and secondary mitigation measures. Natural England will provide our final position on this matter at Deadline 8.	*In addition, the Applicants are considering the use of NAS as mitigation for underwater noise, and the use of it will be dependent on the final project design and determined at the post-consent stage. NAS is being included within the Projects' procurement strategy as an optional element to allow it to be called upon should it be required based on the final design parameters'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]) (REP2-067:2.2): *'In section 3.1.5; paragraph 129, of the **Outline MMMP (Revision 3)** [REP2-047] it states that "the soft-start starting hammer energy would be the lowest possible starting hammer energy" and in paragraph 132, "it is proposed that each piling event would commence with a minimum of 10 minutes at reduced hammer energy, for example 10% of the maximum hammer energy, followed by a gradual ramp-up for at least 20 minutes for all pile driving activities". The initial starting hammer energy and % of the maximum hammer energy this represents will be confirmed post consent with the final project design and included in the final MMMP.'* Additionally, The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP2-067:3.1). See the response provided for Point F6 in **Table 3-7** of this document. Deadline 4 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F10): *'In Paragraph 144, of the Outline MMMP (Revision 4) [document reference: 8.25] submitted at Deadline 4, the Applicants have stated that the Projects will utilise best endeavours to deliver noise reductions, where applicable, through the use of primary and/or secondary noise reduction based on the final project design. These measures may include different foundation types/installation methods and/or noise reduction systems. In support of this statement, the Applicants have submitted a technical note at Deadline 4 (Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note [document reference 14.6]) presenting predicted impact ranges using a 10dB noise reduction.'* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F11): *'As noted in the Applicants' response to Natural England's Appendix F5 Table 1.1 (I.D. 1) the **Draft DCO (Revision 8)** [document reference 3.1] (see Schedule 10 and 11, Condition 15 (1)(g); and Schedule 12 and 13, Condition 13 (1)(g)) submitted at Deadline 5 now includes provision for primary and /or secondary mitigation in the event that driven or part-driven pile foundations are proposed to be used which will be secured through the final MMMP. The Applicants are engaging with Natural England on the condition wording submitted* *The Applicants will include updates to the **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals** [APP-095] at Deadline 7 to reference primary and/or secondary noise reduction measures incorporated into the MMMP and SIP and reference to the latest guidance. It is maintained that the worst-case effects and assessments have been presented in **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals** [APP-095] and that without the confirmed final project design*	

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			and reductions based on confirmed suite of mitigation measures, no further updates can be made at this time.' Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point F6 in **Table 3-7** of this document. Deadline 8 The Applicants consider that the measures secured **Draft DCO (Revision 10)** [REP7-011] (see Schedule 10 and 11, Condition 15 (1)(g); and Schedule 12 and 13, Condition 13 (1)(g)) submitted at Deadline 7 are sufficient to fully mitigate the predicted PTS impacts through primary and/or secondary measures supporting the minor adverse – negligible significance of effect for all marine mammals. End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved. Following submission of the updated **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals (Revision 2)** [REP7-045] submitted at Deadline 7, the Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025 Natural England confirmed this matter could be amended to 'not agreed – no material impact', prior to their review of the updated **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals (Revision 2)** [REP7-045] for Deadline 9.	
F12	To reduce impact of piling in the Offshore Export Cable Corridor (OECC) on grey seals, we advise the Applicants commits to changing the design envelope (e.g. foundation bases with lower construction noise, reduced hammer energy) or the use of NAS to reduce the sound at source.	Deadline 1 Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Issue progressed. Natural England welcome the removal of piling in the ECC however outstanding concerns remain with the grey seal assessment. See Appendix L for further detail. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. Natural England welcome the removal of piling in the ECC however outstanding concerns remain with the grey seal assessment. See Appendix L for further detail. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 25). Deadline 4 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060:F1). Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue resolved. Natural England are closing out this issue as aspects relating to the ECC have been addressed. Our outstanding concerns with grey seal impacts will be focussed in F14, F18 and F19.		
F13	The number of Harbour porpoise potentially disturbed during single piling at DBS East, DBS West and both projects together is high, with up to 12.53% of the North Sea Management Unit (MU) disturbed. We consider this should result in a Major Adverse impact score. The Applicants have concluded minor adverse based on the results of iPCoD modelling alone. The EIA assessment should be updated based on the highest predicted impact values, for all receptors and pathways (not using iPCoD). Where a significant impact cannot be ruled out, the mitigation hierarchy should be explored to reduce the potential impacts.	<u>Deadline 1</u> No Change. <u>Deadline 2</u> No Change. Please refer to Appendix F2 for detailed comments regarding Interim Population Consequences of Disturbance (iPCoD) Modelling. <u>Deadline 3</u> No change. See Appendix L for Natural England's advice on the use of iPCoD modelling. <u>Deadline 4</u> No change. See Appendix L for Natural England's advice on the use of iPCoD modelling. <u>Deadline 5</u> No Change. No new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. The Applicant has stated that they will present updates to the Interim Population Consequence of Disturbance modelling in a revision of the Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 3 of 4 - Annex II Marine Mammals (Revision 3) [APP-047] at Deadline 5. Natural England will therefore provide further comment on this at Deadline 6. <u>Deadline 6</u> No Change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. <u>Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position</u> Issue satisfactorily resolved. Whilst Natural England maintain our advice in relation to the approach taken to the EIA assessment, we are satisfied that the	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F 26): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment, the 12.53% of the North Sea (NS) MU is from cumulative piling effects in section 11.7.3.1.1.2.1.1.in* ***Chapter 11 Marine Mammals*** *[APP-095] and not from single piling at the Projects. The different approaches taken by the Applicants to assess disturbance due to cumulative impacts from other wind farms was based on known disturbance ranges for marine mammals and dose-response curve assessments from relevant Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) / ES chapters, which have been used to determine the worst case possible disturbance effect from piling.* *The quantitative assessment presented in Table 11-111, section 11.7.3.1.1.2.1.1 of* ***Chapter 11 Marine Mammals*** *[APP-095]; shows the magnitude for harbour porpoise is high using the EDR / dose response approaches. These numbers are calculated with the worst case assumption that all offshore wind farms (OWFs) will be piling on the same day, and 9.58% of the effect is from other OWFs in the NS MU. However, the Applicants consider that this is over precautionary as it is highly unlikely that all OWFs could be concurrently piling at exactly the same time.* *Brown et al. (2023) highlights that the approach used to produce the current 26km EDR likely overestimates the response of harbour porpoise because it does not account for underlying seasonal variation during baseline and piling periods. In addition, findings in the latest PrePARED report looking at harbour porpoise response to piling at Ocean Winds Moray West OWF found evidence of an EDR of 10km (for monopiles) providing a strong case for reducing the current 26km EDR for unabated impact piling of monopiles (Benhemma-Le Gall et al. 2024) and further evidence that the current EDR is over precautionary.* *The worst case or highest numbers for cumulative disturbance and PTS from the OWF projects (as identified through review of their relevant ES / PEIR chapters) have been applied to the population modelling which is the basis of the assessment of significance. The iPCoD model is the most appropriate tool to assess the potential long term impacts of disturbance as it considers the consequences of disturbance or injury that might result from the construction of offshore windfarms. The Applicants still consider that use of iPCoD is the best approach to understanding the significance of effect. The model requires detailed demographic information and an understanding of the relationship between days of disturbance and individual survival and reproduction rates (Sinclair et al. 2020) by taking the worst case numbers of disturbance to model a thousand scenarios, and look at population effects on an annual and longer term basis. Therefore, it is considered to be the most appropriate tool to assess cumulative disturbance, so the level of significance of effect remains the same.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		mitigation secured in the updated DCO condition to be submitted at Deadline 7 (detailed in other points) would also resolve any outstanding concerns with respect to EIA impacts were the assessment to be conducted in line with SNCB advice.	*In addition, the Applicants will ensure the residual effect will be minor adverse for the Projects with the implementation of the final SIP post- consent'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in Table 2-11, REP2-067:4 (REP2-069:F13): *'Please see the Applicants' response (RR-039:F1) to why the significance of effect was based on the iPCoD in **The Applicants' Comments to Relevant Representations** [PDA-013]. The Effective Deterrent Ranges (EDRs) for harbour porpoise are likely to be overestimated, as findings from Ocean Winds Moray West OWF found evidence of a 10km EDR from monopiles with a 10m diameter and with no noise mitigation (Benhemma-Le Gall et al. 202420) but the assessment with the 26 km EDR has been presented. For the cumulative assessment for potential disturbance of harbour porpoise, an EDR of 26km was used for other OWF projects unless results from the dose response curve was the worst case as it was for the Projects. The dose response curve for harbour porpoise for pile driving Graham et al. (201721) predicts an almost 100% response at received levels of 160 dB re 1 µPa2s SELss, ~70% response at 150 dB re 1 µPa2s SELss and only ~50% response at 145 dB re 1 µPa2s SELss. Therefore, the assumption that 100% of the animals are disturbed is likely to be highly over-precautionary (Sinclair et al. 202322). There is no dose response curve for grey seal, in sections 11.6.1.2.2.2 and 11.6.1.2.3.2 in Chapter 11 Marine Mammals [APP-095], the dose response curve for harbour seal (Whyte et al. 202023) was applied to grey seal. This approach has its limitations given the different hearing ranges and sensitivities between the species and can result in overestimates of disturbance which result in an over precautionary approach.* *Therefore, the Applicants maintain that population modelling is the best tool to understand the cumulative disturbance as it considers the consequences of disturbance and hearing damage in the long term, incorporating the worst case numbers for permanent threshold shift (PTS) and disturbance. If the significance of effect is solely based on EDRs or dose response curve, this highlights the short-term disturbance only, assuming 100% of animals will respond and can be over precautionary. Therefore creating a snapshot of the impact and not considering any longterm effects, or animals returning to the area after piling. Studies such as Benhemma-Le Gall et al. (2024) and others presented in section 11.6.1.2.1 of Chapter 11 Marine Mammals [APP-095] found that harbour porpoises and other marine mammals return to the area soon after the end of piling.* *A Marine Mammal Technical note: Significance of Effect for disturbance from piling and cumulative underwater noise [document reference 13.6] has been submitted at Deadline 3 showing the magnitude and significance of effect for marine mammals from all methods presented in section 11.6.1.2 of Chapter 11 Marine Mammals [APP-095] to assess for any potential disturbance from piling at the Projects. The significance of effect will be presented from the cumulative assessment of disturbance from piling and from noisy activities to consider other methods of calculating disturbance alongside the results from the iPCoD.'* Deadline 4	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F13): *'The Applicants submitted a technical note at Deadline 3 (Marine Mammal Technical note: Significance of Effect for disturbance from piling and cumulative underwater noise [REP3-031]) showing the magnitude and significance of effect for harbour porpoise presenting a quantitative assessment using numbers from Effective Deterrent Ranges (EDRs) and dose response curve in addition to the iPCoD.* *However, it is considered that the cumulative assessment is over precautionary as it is highly unlikely that all relevant OWFs could be concurrently piling at the same time for various reasons such as vessel constraints, programme changes, technical issues, or weather delays. Also, the assessment is using a 26km EDR, whereas many of the projects will be utilising a method of sound reduction in accordance with Defra's marine noise policy, therefore reducing the EDR to 15km, making this assessment over precautionary. In addition, Brown et al. (202332) highlights that the approach used to produce the current 26km EDR for harbour porpoise likely highly overestimates the response because it does not account for underlying seasonal variation during baseline and piling periods. In addition, recent findings in the latest PrePared report (Benhemma-Le Gall et al. 202433) looking at harbour porpoise response to piling at Ocean Winds Moray West OWF found evidence of an EDR of 10km for unabated piling of a 10m monopile, providing a strong case for reducing the current 26km EDR for unabated impact piling of monopiles, and highlighted further evidence of over precaution within the cumulative assessment.'* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F13): *'The information presented in **Appendix B Marine Mammal Environmental Statement Update** [AS-143] of the **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and Marine Mammal Technical note: Significance of Effect for disturbance from piling and cumulative underwater noise (document reference 13.6) will be incorporated in to **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals (Revision 2)** (document reference 7.11) at Deadline 7 along with the requested updates to the iPCoD modelling (mean and 95% CI) and a population level stressor qualitative assessment. This will incorporate the same scope of changes presented in the **RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4 - Annex II Marine Mammals (Revision 3)** [REP5-009] at Deadline 5.'* Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-075:9): *'The Applicants have amended the condition wording regarding noise reduction to the following at Deadline 7:* *(g) in the event that driven or part-driven pile foundations are proposed to be used, a marine mammal mitigation protocol (in accordance with the outline marine mammal mitigation protocol), the intention of which is to prevent injury to marine mammals, following current best practice as advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies and which must include details of noise reduction methods through project design (primary measures) and/or, deployment of noise mitigation systems or noise abatement systems (secondary measures) that will be utilised to manage sounds from those piling*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			activities and such protocol must include full details and justification for the mitigation chosen or excluded for deployment. *The Applicants have agreed this wording with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 respectively in order to enable Natural England to confirm there is no AEoI on the SACs from the Projects.* *To ensure these measures are also appropriate to reduce potential effects for the updated assessment on the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, updates have been made to illustrate the mitigated impact ranges in **Illustrative Underwater Noise Technical Note (Revision 3)** [document reference 14.9] submitted at Deadline 7. Natural England confirmed via email on 20th June 2025 that they anticipate this matter to be resolved at Deadline 8 and no AEoI for WNNC SAC to be concluded.'* Deadline 8 and End of Examination Position The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
F14	The number of grey seals disturbed during single piling at DBS East, DBS West and both projects together is high, with up to 30.62% of the South-East England MU disturbed. Using the number of animals potentially disturbed, the magnitude of impact is high, resulting in an impact score of moderate (significant). The EIA assessment should be updated based on 'the highest predicted impact values. Where a significant impact cannot be ruled out, the mitigation hierarchy should be explored to reduce the potential impacts.	Deadline 1 No Change. Deadline 2 No Change. Please refer to Appendix F2 for detailed comments regarding Interim Population Consequences of Disturbance (iPCoD) Modelling. Deadline 3 No change. See Appendix L for Natural England's advice on the use of iPCoD modelling. Deadline 4 No change. See Appendix L for Natural England's advice on the use of iPCoD modelling. Deadline 5 No Change. No new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. The Applicant has stated that they will present updates to the Interim Population Consequence of Disturbance modelling in a revision of the Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 3 of 4 - Annex II Marine Mammals (Revision 3) [APP-047] at Deadline 5.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F27): *'The quantitative assessment presented in Table 11-116 in section 11.7.3.1.1.2.1.6 of **Chapter 11 Marine Mammals** [APP-095] shows the magnitude for grey seal for cumulative piling effects is high using the EDR / dose response approaches. These numbers are calculated with the worst case assumption that all OWFs will be piling on the same day, and 10.198% and 5.83% of the effect is from other OWFs in the SE England MU and wider MU respectively. However, the Applicants consider that this is over precautionary as it is highly unlikely that all OWFs could be concurrently piling at exactly the same time.* *The 25km EDR for grey seal is also likely to be over precautionary because it stems from a single study on harbour seal response to OWFs. This study did not account for variations in piling characteristics or the effects of bathymetry on sound propagation. Consequently, the displacement distance of grey seal could vary significantly across sites (Madsen et al. 2006, Russell et al. 2016). Likewise, the dose response curve is based on the behavioural response of harbours seal rather than grey seal.* *The Applicants maintain the position that the iPCoD model is the most appropriate tool to assess the potential impacts of disturbance as it considers the consequences of disturbance or injury (using the worst case numbers from the OWF projects as identified through review of their relevant ES / PEIR chapters) that might result from the construction of offshore windfarms and therefore the level of significance of effect remains the same'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in Table 2-11, REP2-067:4 (REP2-069:F14). See response in Point F3 at Deadline 3. Deadline 4	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Natural England will therefore provide further comment on this at Deadline 6. Deadline 6 No Change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. Whilst Natural England maintain our advice in relation to the approach taken to the EIA assessment, we are satisfied that the mitigation secured in the updated DCO condition to be submitted at Deadline 7 (detailed in other points) would also resolve any outstanding concerns with respect to EIA impacts were the assessment to be conducted in line with SNCB advice.	The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F13): *'The Applicants submitted a technical note at Deadline 3 (Marine Mammal Technical note: Significance of Effect for disturbance from piling and cumulative underwater noise [document reference: 13.6]) showing the magnitude and significance of effect for all marine mammal species, including grey seal from all methods including EDRs and dose response curves presented in sections 11.7.3.1.1.3 and 11.7.3.2.10 of Chapter 11 Marine Mammals [APP-095]. This technical note presents any potential cumulative disturbance from piling based on the other methods of calculating disturbance alongside the results from the iPCoD presented in Chapter 11 Marine Mammals [APP-095].* *However, the Applicants maintain that population modelling is the best tool to understand cumulative disturbance over the long term. If the significance of effect is solely based on EDRs or dose response curve, this highlights only the short-term disturbance, therefore not considering any long-term effects, or animals returning to the area after piling.* *In response to the Defra Policy Paper on Reducing Marine Noise which was published as part of Defra's Marine Noise Package, the Projects will utilise best endeavours to deliver noise reductions, where applicable, through the use of primary and/or secondary noise reduction based on the final project design. Noise reduction systems, such as NAS, are being included within the Projects' procurement strategy as an optional element to allow it to be called upon should it be required based on the final design parameters.'* Deadline 5 The Applicants confirm that **RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4 – Annex II Marine Mammals (Revision 3)** [REP5-009] was issued at Deadline 5, which included updates to the Interim Population Consequence of Disturbance modelling. Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F14): *'The information presented in **Appendix B Marine Mammal Environmental Statement Update** [AS-143] of the **Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works** [AS-141] and **Marine Mammal Technical note: Significance of Effect for disturbance from piling and cumulative underwater noise** [REP3-031] will be incorporated in to Chapter 11 – Marine Mammals (Revision 2) (document reference 7.11) at Deadline 7 along with the requested updates to the iPCoD modelling (mean and 95% CI) and a population level stressor qualitative assessment. This will incorporate the same scope of changes presented in the **RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4 - Annex II Marine Mammals (Revision 3)** [REP5-009] at Deadline 5.* *Reference and inclusion of the Defra marine noise package (2025) and the use of primary and/ or secondary methods will also be made at this time.'* Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point F6 of this table.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Deadline 8 and End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the Condition wording detailed at Deadline 7 in Point F6 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025. However, the Applicants note that Natural England's 'not agreed' position on the highest predicted impact values within EIA, but welcome that the issue has been satisfactorily resolved.	
F15	Natural England supports the Applicants commitment to a joint industry project or site-based monitoring project, and requests to be consulted on future marine mammal monitoring plans.	Deadline 1 No Action Required. Natural England will be providing comments on the In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) [APP-247] at Deadline 3. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Please refer to Appendix J regarding Natural England's advice on the IPMP. Deadline 4 Please refer to Appendix J regarding Natural England's advice on the IPMP. End of Examination Position Natural England maintain our previous advice submitted at Deadline 3 [REP3-056] and will provide further comment on marine mammal monitoring plans submitted post-consent.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's support for marine mammal monitoring and will look forward to future consultations.	
F16	We do not agree with the Applicants screening out PTS from the assessment on the basis of it being screened out from the Cumulative Effects Assessment. PTS should be screened into the HRA assessment. See comment F16.	Deadline 1 & 2 No change Deadline 3, 4 & 5 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 Issue progressed. Natural England welcomes that PTS impacts have been included in the RIAA [REP5-010], however we disagree with the assessment conclusions and that mitigation has been	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F29). Deadline 4 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F16). Additionally, see the response provided for Point F4, **Table 3-7,** Deadline 4 in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-075: 1):	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		appropriately secured. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation to support the assessment conclusions. We therefore consider this issue resolved.	*'The Applicants have amended the condition wording regarding noise reduction to the following at Deadline 7:* *(g) in the event that driven or part-driven pile foundations are proposed to be used, a marine mammal mitigation protocol (in accordance with the outline marine mammal mitigation protocol), the intention of which is to prevent injury to marine mammals, following current best practice as advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies and which must include details of noise reduction methods through project design (primary measures) and/or, deployment of noise mitigation systems or noise abatement systems (secondary measures) that will be utilised to manage sounds from those piling activities and such protocol must include full details and justification for the mitigation chosen or excluded for deployment.* *The Applicants have agreed this wording with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 respectively in order to enable Natural England to confirm there is no adverse effects on site integrity (AEoI) on the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) from the Projects.* *To ensure these measures are also appropriate to reduce potential effects for the updated assessment on the Wash and North Norfolk Coast (WNNC) SAC, updates have been made to illustrate the mitigated impact ranges in **Illustrative Underwater Noise Technical Note (Revision 3)** [document reference 14.9] submitted at Deadline 7. Natural England confirmed via email on 20th June 2025 that they anticipate this matter to be resolved at Deadline 8 and no AEoI for WNNC SAC to be concluded.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved.	
F17	The conclusions for the RIAA illustrate that the noise thresholds for the SNS SAC would be significantly breached by the Project in combination with other noisy activities. Additional mitigation will be needed to avoid an Adverse Effect on Site Integrity (AEoI), however the current approach to implementing Site Integrity Plans (SIPs) for piling impacts to the Southern North Sea SAC does not allow sufficient time for mitigation methods, such as NAS, to be procured by the Applicants prior to construction should they be required. We strongly advise that the Applicants commit to the use of specific mitigation measures including noise abatement in the Outline SIP and MMMP at this stage. We advise that the effect of noise abatement systems in reducing noise impacts should be included in the submitted assessments.	Deadline 1 The Defra Marine Noise Policy paper was published on 21st January 2025. Natural England is reviewing this in terms of what it means for our advice on this project. We will provide further comment on the relevant Outline MMMP and Draft In Principle SIP updates at Deadline 2. Deadline 2 No Change. Please refer to Appendix F2 for detailed comments regarding the Draft In Principle Site Integrity Plan for the Southern North Sea SAC. Deadline 3 & 4 No Change. See Appendix F3 for further detail regarding the Draft In Principle Site Integrity Plan for the Southern North Sea SAC.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F33). Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-069:F17). In addition, see response provided in F6 of **Table 3-7** at Deadline 3. Deadline 4 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F17). Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061: F17). Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point F16 in **Table 3-7** of this document.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 5 No Change. Natural England welcomes the submission of the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 4, and agrees that were a 10dB noise reduction to be applied, an AEoI on SNS SAC could likely be ruled out. However, the Applicant has not committed to delivering this reduction. We advise the Applicant to commit to reducing the estimated noise by 10dB via primary and/or secondary mitigation, with the exact methods to be deployed determined post-consent. See Appendix F5 for further detail. Please see Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England acknowledges the updates to the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note and RIAA at Deadline 5, however our Deadline 5 advice remains regarding commitments to primary and/or secondary mitigation. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation. Whilst the Applicant has not committed to a specific level of noise reduction in dB, we are satisfied that the assessment provided in [REP5-033] has demonstrated that mitigation could be applied to reduce impacts to a level where AEoI can be ruled out. We therefore agree that an AEoI can be ruled out for harbour porpoise in SNS SAC.	End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved.	
F18	Natural England cannot agree to the conclusion of no AEoI on grey seals in the Humber Estuary SAC. The Applicants assessment suggests that more	Deadline 1	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F35).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	than 9% of the Humber Estuary SAC grey seal population has the potential to be impacted by disturbance from piling (monopile or jacket pin pile) in the OECC. The assessment conclusions should be updated based on the highest predicted impact values. Where an AEoI cannot be ruled out, additional mitigation should be explored to avoid or reduce impacts.	No Change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. Deadline 2 No change Deadline 3 Natural England cannot rule out AEoI on Humber Estuary SAC at this time. See Appendix L for further detail. Deadline 4 Natural England cannot rule out AEoI on Humber Estuary SAC at this time. See Appendix L for further detail. Deadline 5 No Change. Natural England welcomes the submission of the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 4, and agrees that were a 10dB noise reduction to be applied, an AEoI on grey seal from the Humber Estuary SAC could likely be ruled out. However, the Applicant has not committed to delivering this reduction. We advise the Applicant to commit to reducing the estimated noise by 10dB via primary and/or secondary mitigation, with the exact methods to be deployed determined post-consent. See Appendix F5 for further detail. Please see Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England acknowledges the updates to the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note and RIAA at Deadline 5, however our Deadline 5 advice remains regarding commitments to primary and/or secondary mitigation. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position	Deadline 4 The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F18). Deadline 6 See response provided at Deadline 6 in Point 17 of this table. Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point F16 in **Table 3-7** of this document. End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation. Whilst the Applicant has not committed to a specific level of noise reduction in dB, we are satisfied that the assessment provided in [REP5-033] has demonstrated that mitigation could be applied to reduce impacts to a level where AEoI can be ruled out. We therefore agree that an AEoI can be ruled out for grey seal in the Humber Estuary SAC.		
F19	Natural England cannot agree to the conclusion of no AEoI on grey seals in the Berwickshire North Northumberland Coast (BNNC) SAC. The Applicants assessment suggests that more than 5% (and therefore a significant number) of the BNNC SAC grey seal population could be disturbed by piling at DBS West and OECC in isolation and together using the dose response approach. The assessment conclusions should be updated based on the highest predicted impact values. Where an AEoI cannot be ruled out, additional mitigation should be explored to avoid or reduce impacts.	<u>Deadline 1</u> No change. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 3 following review of the now accepted Change Request. <u>Deadline 2</u> No change <u>Deadline 3</u> Natural England cannot rule out AEoI on Berwickshire North Northumberland Coast (BNNC) SAC at this time. See Appendix L for further detail. <u>Deadline 4</u> Natural England cannot rule out AEoI on Berwickshire North Northumberland Coast (BNNC) SAC at this time. See Appendix L for further detail. <u>Deadline 5</u> No Change. Natural England welcomes the submission of the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note at Deadline 4, and agrees that were a 10dB noise reduction to be applied, an AEoI on grey seal from the BNNC SAC could likely be ruled out. However, the Applicant has not committed to delivering this reduction. We advise the Applicant to commit to reducing the estimated noise by 10dB via primary and/or secondary mitigation, with the	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F36). <u>Deadline 4</u> The Applicants provided a response in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-060: F19): *'As response above, the removal of the ESP in the Project Change Request 1 – Offshore and Intertidal Works [AS-141], has greatly reduced the number of grey seal that could be potentially disturbed from piling for Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC (as presented in section 5.1.2 of Appendix C Marine Mammal RIAA HRA Update [AS-144]). The Applicants maintain that population modelling is the best tool to understand cumulative disturbance from piling over the long term. If the significance of effect is solely based on EDRs or dose response curve, this highlights only the short-term disturbance, therefore not considering any long-term effects, or animals returning to the area after piling. The results from the iPCoD modelling show no AEoI on Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC for the Projects alone.'* <u>Deadline 6</u> See response provided at Deadline 6 in Point 17 of this table. <u>Deadline 7</u> See response provided at Deadline 7 to Point F16 in **Table 3-7** of this document. <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants have agreed the wording detailed in the Deadline 7 position with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025 and consider this matter resolved.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		exact methods to be deployed determined post-consent. See Appendix F5 for further detail. Please see Appendix F5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England acknowledges the updates to the Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note and RIAA at Deadline 5, however our Deadline 5 advice remains regarding commitments to primary and/or secondary mitigation. Please see Appendix F6 of our Deadline 6 submission for further detail. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We advise that we are satisfied that this updated condition sufficiently secures the application of additional primary and/or secondary mitigation. Whilst the Applicant has not committed to a specific level of noise reduction in dB, we are satisfied that the assessment provided in [REP5-033] has demonstrated that mitigation could be applied to reduce impacts to a level where AEoI can be ruled out. We therefore agree that an AEoI can be ruled out for grey seal in BNNC SAC.		
F20	Indirect Effects - We disagree that it can be concluded that there is no risk of AEoI to marine mammal SAC features as a result of impacts on prey species, solely due to impacts being ruled out at EIA scale. Consideration has also only been given to temporary construction impacts on prey in the RIAA, rather than the indirect effects of permanent spawning habitat loss that will also occur. Please see Appendix E for our detailed comments on the indirect effects assessment.	Deadline 1 No Change. Deadline 2 No Change. We note the Applicants have contested the importance of the Dogger Bank sandbank system for prey availability and foraging species. Natural England disagrees with the justification provided and therefore maintains the advice provided in our Relevant Representation [AS-048] on this issue. Deadline 3	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: F6): *'As outlined in **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091] a worst case scenario associated with the development of the Projects determines a loss of habitat of 4.19km² across the Offshore Development Area, comprising both the Array Areas (2.05km²) and the Offshore Export Cable Corridor (2.14km²). The Applicants consider this to be minor because of the wide foraging ranges of marine mammals and that they can move to another area to find prey, the significance was assessed as negligible or minor adverse, therefore Not Significant in EIA terms. The impact has been assessed in sections 8.35.2.9.1 and 8.3.5.3.9 in the **RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4** [APP-047].* *It should be noted that the Applicants are in the process of preparing a change request relating to the relevant design parameters. The ExA was notified of the Applicants' intention to make this change request on the 8th October 2024 (**Change Notification Letter** [PDA-012]). It is expected that the change request will be submitted in early January 2025 following targeted consultation. Of relevance to this*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 No Change. Please see Appendix E5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No Change - Natural England maintains their Deadline 5 advice, and refers to Appendix E6 for further detail on impacts to fish species. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. The Applicant has given Natural England advance sight of updates to the DCO condition related to noise mitigation for piling to be submitted at Deadline 7. We have also been given sight of updated conditions with respect to piling restrictions for herring. We advise that we are satisfied that these updated conditions sufficiently secure the application of additional mitigation which could substantially reduce impacts to Atlantic herring (as demonstrated in [REP5-033]). Noting that AEoI conclusions are made at feature level, were an AEoI to be concluded for SNS SAC harbour porpoise overall, we would have considered indirect impacts to prey species to be a contributing factor. However, in light of the above, we do not consider the risk to harbour porpoise from indirect impacts on prey species is sufficient to drive an AEoI conclusion alone. Please see our responses to RIES Q32 and Q52 in Appendix N for further detail. Any outstanding issues relating to indirect effects are outlined in the Fish and Shellfish section of the R&I log submitted at Deadline 7.	*matter is the proposed reduction in the number of platforms and overall reduction in cable lengths within the Array Areas. The change request will be supported by a **Project Change Request – Environmental Assessment Update** [document reference: C1.1], which will describe any resultant changes to the assessment conclusions presented in the ES and RIAA. This information will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of the change request in early January. All the changes are expected to be positive i.e. reducing or removing impacts. Impacts upon prey are considered in the Plan Level HRA (RIAA Appendix I Marine Mammal Array Assessment Part 2; The Crown Estate, 2022) under the following pressures P1 Habitat Loss / Gain, P2 Direct Physical Damage and P3 Indirect Physical Damage. The HRA concludes that:* *The effect of this habitat loss will be to reduce the area available for foraging and also the extent of habitat for species which form prey. However, all marine mammal species forage widely within the marine environment and the predicted loss of habitat represents a very small proportion of the foraging habitat available. Any impact on marine mammal features is, therefore, considered to be negligible at any meaningful population scale and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact.* *Damage to physical habitats could affect prey species, or benthic communities upon which these are dependent. However, all marine mammal species forage widely within the marine environment and the predicted loss of habitat represents a very small proportion of the foraging habitat available. Any impact on marine mammal features is, therefore, considered to be negligible at any meaningful population scale and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact.* The Habitats Assessment (Appendix J) notes that indirect physical damage cannot be quantified at present but some effects are expected. Based on *evidence presented in Appendix J which suggests that such effects will be relatively localised and generally accounted for within areas attributed to habitat loss it is considered that the scale of effects will not be significant in the context of possible impacts upon supporting habitats for marine mammals. Any impact on marine mammal features is, therefore, considered to be negligible at any meaningful population scale and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact.* *Although the overall effect of habitat loss will be to reduce the area available for foraging and the extent of habitat for prey species, habitat loss effects will be negligible given the small proportion of habitat occupied by the structures compared to the large foraging ranges of the protected features, as indicated by the distances used in relation to screening. Similarly, although offshore wind structures may provide new foraging opportunities for some species (e.g. Clausen et al. 2021; Russell et al. 2014) habitat gain effects are expected to be negligible in the context of foraging ranges'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028). See the response provided for Point C10 in **Table 3-4** of this document, at Deadline 3.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			In addition, The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028], REP2-069:F20: '*The Applicants note that an assessment of long term habitat loss with regards to changes to prey resources (i.e. the indirect effects of permanent spawning habitat loss) was assessed in section 8.3.5.3.9.1 of the RIAA HRA Part 3 of 4 - Annex II Marine Mammals [APP-047] for the SNS SAC, the only SAC designated for marine mammals where habitat loss associated with the Projects would occur. The assessment concluded that would be no adverse effect on site integrity of the SNS SAC due to minimal spatial extent any habitat loss associated with the Projects would have on the wider available spawning habitat for prey species within the SNS SAC.*' Deadline 4 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP4-088). See the response provided for Point C10 in **Table 3-4** of this document. As well as this, The Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088], REP3-060:F20: '*The Applicants direct Natural England to the Effects on Prey Species Technical Note [document reference: 14.8] submitted at Deadline 4, which presents all information previously submitted by the Applicants regarding effects on prey species from the Environmental Statement and the RIAA, in addition to the Applicants' responses to comments received from stakeholders during the pre-examination / examination stages of the Projects. This report has been produced to provide a single source of information on the topic of effects on prey species for stakeholders / the Examining Authority to refer to, noting that information in the Application originally appeared in many separate documents.*' Deadline 7 As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-071: F20): The Applicants direct Natural England to the updated **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [REP6-049], submitted at Deadline 6, which presents further details on the Applicants' position that there will be no significant impacts on fish prey species resulting from the Projects. End of Examination Position The Applicants have agreed the Condition wording with regards to mammals, detailed at Deadline 7 in Point F6 position, and herring with Natural England and the MMO by email on 20th June 2025 and 24th June 2025. However, the Applicants note that Natural England's 'not agreed' position on the impacts to prey species within the RIAA, but welcome that the issue has been satisfactorily resolved.	
F21	Whilst Natural England welcomes the Applicant updating the DCO to include the Maximum Hammer Energy, we advise that within Section 3.1.5 of the Outline MMMP [AS-101] it is clearly stated what the Applicant's intentions are	Deadline 2 Whilst Natural England welcomes the Applicants updating the DCO to include the Maximum Hammer Energy, we advise that within Section 3.1.5 of the Outline MMMP [AS-101] it is clearly stated what the	Deadline 3: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028]. See the response provided for Point F11 in **Table 3-7** of this document. Deadline 4:	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	regarding the commencing hammer energy in addition to the percentage of the maximum hammer energy this represents.	Applicants intentions are regarding the commencing hammer energy in addition to the percentage of the maximum hammer energy this represents. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcomes the Applicant's updates regarding the commencing hammer energy in addition to the percentage of the maximum hammer energy this represents in the Outline MMMP. The Applicant must include confirmation of these values in the final MMMP.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. See the response provided for Point F11 in **Table 3-7** of this document. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter and confirm these values will be included in the final MMMP. End of Examination Position The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
F22	Natural England welcomes the Applicant's Scheduling of UXO clearance with other projects (Section 9.6 of Draft In Principle Site Integrity Plan) as a useful tool for minimising the area of disturbance on a particular day; however this method should be in addition to noise reducing technology as outlined in Defra's recently published Marine Noise Package. Natural England will provide further comment following the Applicant's review of the Defra Noise Package documents and updated assessment and mitigation measures.	Deadline 2 Natural England welcomes the Applicants Scheduling of UXO clearance with other projects (Section 9.6 of Draft In Principle Site Integrity Plan) as a useful tool for minimising the area of disturbance on a particular day; however this method should be in addition to noise reducing technology as outlined in Defra's recently published Marine Noise Package. Natural England will provide further comment following the Applicants review of the Defra Noise Package documents and updated assessment and mitigation measures. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position	Deadline 3: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (REP2-067:2.2). See the response provided for Point F6 in **Table 3-7** of this document. In addition, the Applicants provided responses in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028], REP2-069:F22. Deadline 4: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088]. See the response provided for Point F7 in **Table 3-7** of this document. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix F -Marine Mammals	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue resolved. Natural England welcomes the Applicant's updates to the outline MMMP to include low order methods as default for UXO removal, and to use NAS where high order is unavoidable. Natural England advises that UXO clearance with and without additional mitigation measures, are presented in the final UXO clearance MMMP and UXO clearance Marine Licence Application.		
F23	The following new issue was missed from the Deadline 6 submission of the R&I log [REP6-075] in error: Following updated values submitted in the RIAA [REP5-010], Natural England cannot agree to the conclusion of no AEoI on harbour seal in the Wash and North Norfolk Coast (WNNC) SAC for the project in combination with other plans or projects. Please see Appendix F6 [REP6-075] for further detail.	Deadline 6 New issue Deadline 7 No change. Natural England are awaiting further clarification on whether the impacts presented in [REP5-010] are correct. However, following discussions with the Applicant we understand that an updated Illustrative Noise Reduction Technical Note [REP5-033] will be submitted at Deadline 7 to incorporate WNNC SAC harbour seal. In combination with the updated DCO condition detailed above, we consider it likely that this issue will be resolved within Examination. We will provide further comment at Deadline 8.	Deadline 7 The Applicants can confirm that the **Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note (Revision 3)** [REP7-125] was submitted at Deadline 7. Subsequently an error was found on the title of Figure 4-5, this has been amended in a revised version of the document submitted at Deadline 8. End of Examination Position The Applicants can confirm that the **Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note (Revision 4)** [document reference: 14.9] was submitted at Deadline 8 and consider this matter resolved. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Illustrative Underwater Noise Reduction Technical Note (Revision 3)** [REP7-125] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

3.8 Offshore Ornithology

Table 3-8 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Offshore Ornithology

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
G1	We do not support the approach taken by the Applicants to combine the impacts of the two arrays for several aspects of the assessment (e.g. abundance estimates and displacement) as it underrepresents the impacts. The impacts for the arrays should be calculated separately for each	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have updated abundance estimates for the arrays combined in line with SNCB advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 11).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	array and summed to represent the worst case scenario.			
G2	The baseline surveys undertaken are broadly appropriate, however there are outstanding issues with how the data has been characterised.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. See G3.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
G3	There is considerable variation in the abundance and density estimates between survey years for several species, however no assessment of between-year variation has been undertaken and no additional datasets have been considered when characterising the baseline. We advise that the Applicants provide an assessment of between-year variation in their baseline data with consideration of additional datasets, such as baseline data from other nearby OWF projects and modelled datasets, to characterise and assess the representativeness of the baseline. This is particularly important given that the baseline survey period includes months before and during the recent highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. We are broadly satisfied that the baseline has been satisfactorily characterised.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 13).	
G4	The Applicants have not used the most recent seabird census or latest research on impacts of HPAI in there assessment (e.g. Tremlett et al 2024). The Applicants should consider all relevant evidence on seabird population trends when assessing impacts and present an updated assessment that reflects this.	February 27th Submission Issue resolved. We are broadly satisfied that the baseline has been satisfactorily characterised. End of Examination Position Issue largely resolved. Natural England welcomes that the additional evidence has now been included, however we do not agree with the current interpretation of the trends in the assessment. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 14).	
G5	We do not support the approach taken by the Applicants to combine the monthly abundance estimates for the two arrays. As the 2km buffers for the two arrays do not overlap, we advise that the monthly abundance estimates for the arrays combined should be calculated as the sum of the	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have updated abundance estimates for the arrays combined in line with SNCB advice.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 11).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	monthly abundance estimates for each separate array.			
G6	Seasonal peak abundances for the arrays combined should be calculated as the sum of the highest value from each array, even if these occur in different months. The current approach will cause the impacts calculated in the displacement assessment to be underestimated (see G21).	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have updated abundance estimates for the arrays combined in line with SNCB advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 16).	
G7	There appear to be several inconsistencies in the abundance estimates presented for razorbill. All razorbill monthly and seasonal mean peak abundance estimates for both arrays should be checked to ensure accuracy and consistency, and that the correct abundance estimates have been used for displacement assessments throughout. If necessary, updates to the assessment should be provided.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have confirmed that the numbers presented are correct and that no updates are needed.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 17).	
G8	The Applicants have not included an assessment of displacement impacts for the decommissioning phase. We advise that displacement impacts at decommissioning are included for all species in the displacement assessment and calculated as per construction displacement impacts.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No change. Natural England advise that it would be beneficial for decommissioning impacts are to be explicitly quantified in the assessment as for construction impacts.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 18): *'Section 12.6.3 of **Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology** [APP-103] provides the decommissioning assessment which has reasonably been assumed to be equivalent to construction effects. The approach to the presentation of this assessment is proportionate and in line with best practice.'* Deadline 3 and End of Examination Position The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that they *'could undertake a copy-paste exercise of the construction impacts, rebadging them as decommissioning impacts, but this would be of no benefit to the assessment and is considered unnecessary. The Applicants disagree with Natural England's statement that not including the full text in relation to decommissioning impacts represents under-precaution in the assessment. Since decommissioning is predicted to have an impact no greater than construction (and this is not disputed by Natural England) and it has been demonstrated that construction impacts will not result in significant effects or adverse effects on integrity it is clear that there is no material effect on the assessment conclusions from not presenting the full text in the decommissioning assessment'.*	
G9	The Applicants have not used Natural England's advised baseline mortality rates or EIA reference populations for several species. An updated assessment should be provided using the SNCB	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 19).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	advised EIA reference populations and baseline mortality rates to calculate annual background mortality for all species, with impacts assessed against these annual background mortality rates.	Issue Resolved. Natural England welcome that the Applicants have updated EIA baseline mortality rates and reference populations to reflect our advice.		
G10	The Applicants have used mean maximum foraging ranges when determining connectivity of the projects to seabird breeding colonies instead of the recommended mean maximum foraging ranges + 1SD. We advise that mean maximum foraging range plus 1SD (Woodward et al., 2019) is used to establish connectivity between the projects and seabird breeding colonies.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Natural England have reviewed the Applicants' Responses, and whilst we maintain that it would be best practice for the mean max foraging range +1SD to be used in the EIA assessment, we agree that it has been used correctly for the HRA assessment and would not materially impact the EIA conclusions. We will not pursue this further.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 20): '*This comment is of relevance primarily to the HRA (Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4 [App-048]) which does apply the longer foraging ranges (mean max plus 1SD). As the portion of assessment referred to here is consideration of effects against the wider EIA population the Applicants do not consider there to be any requirement to update the assessment for this aspect'.* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position as outlined above.	
G11	The displacement assessment impacts for the arrays combined do not reflect the sum of the displacement impacts of the arrays summed, due to the method used to calculate seasonal peak abundance for the arrays combined (see G16). We advise that displacement impacts are re-calculated separately for each array and then summed.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have updated their displacement assessment for the arrays combined in line with SNCB advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 21).	
G12	The spatial distribution figures show that high densities of auks (particularly guillemot and razorbill) were recorded in the area between the two arrays, but outside the 2km buffer. We consider it is likely that birds in this area will be vulnerable to cumulative displacement impacts from the arrays on either side. We advise that an assessment of cumulative displacement impacts on auks between the arrays is provided.	February 27th Submission No Change. Natural England maintain our previous advice that further assessment is needed of cumulative displacement impacts on auks between the arrays. Please refer to Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change – Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 22). Deadline 3: See the Applicants full response in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] in Table 2-13 [AS159] (ID R&I ref: G12, RR ref: G22): Deadline 6 The Applicants confirm the **Potential Auk Displacement Between Dogger Bank South Array Areas** [REP6-053] report has been submitted at Deadline 6. End of Examination Position The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue progressed. Natural England understand that the Applicant will be submitting a cumulative displacement assessment for the full area between the two arrays at Deadline 5. This was presented to Natural England at a meeting on 7th May 2025 and we have agreed that, pending review of the full report, this will be sufficient to provide necessary context and impact conclusions would likely be unaffected. Deadline 6 No Change. The Applicant has stated that the technical note outlining displacement between the two arrays will be submitted at Deadline 6. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue resolved. We welcome the Applicant's provision of an assessment of cumulative displacement impacts on auks between the two arrays in [REP6-053]. We agree with the Applicant that the EIA and HRA assessment does not need to be updated further.		
G13	The Applicants have not followed the SNCB Best Practice Guidance for calculating construction displacement impacts, which is to halve the operational impacts. We advise that the construction displacement assessment is updated.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. Natural England have reviewed the Applicants' Responses and are satisfied with the construction displacement assessment provided.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 23).	
G14	We do not agree with the approach taken for seasonality when assessing impacts on guillemot. We advise that the assessment is updated with August and September treated as a separate 'chick rearing and moult' season, with seasonal mean peaks and impacts calculated accordingly.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicants updated assessment.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
G15	The forthcoming Offshore Renewables Joint Industry Programme (ORJIP) project 'Improving understanding of distributional change for relevant seabird species (ImpUDis)' will provide a comprehensive overview of auk displacement. Until this project returns evidence which can inform	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No Change. Natural England maintain the advice provided in our Relevant Representation. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 25): *'The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England adopts a different approach to that applied by the Applicants, but would note that the review on which the Applicants have drawn (Vattenfall 2019) was undertaken by Prof Bob Furness, one of the most well respected and eminent seabird ecologists. It is also of note that the Applicants' rates of 50% displaced and 1% mortality were still categorised in this review*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	displacement rates of auks, Natural England continue to advise the use of the displacement matrix set out in our Best Practice Guidance and will base our conclusions on impacts calculated using these rates.		*as precautionary. Natural England cites, as evidence to support its position, studies which have undertaken before-after comparisons of auk abundance. These studies are prone to a fundamental weakness since they are incapable of distinguishing natural inter-annual variations in seabird distributions and local abundance from the effects of wind farms. For precisely this reason, an alternative method was developed in a monitoring study of the Beatrice wind farm which removes the confounding issue of between year variations (Trinder et al. 2024). This study was unable to find any compelling evidence that breeding auks were displaced from the wind farm, with individuals recorded in large numbers throughout the wind farm, including within 100m of operating turbines. In this context, even 50% displacement can be regarded as highly precautionary. Furthermore, if there is little or no displacement, there is arguably no consequent mortality either.'* Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that *'Natural England is incorrect in their statement that Trinder et al. (2024) does not consider distributional changes beyond the wind farm. Furthermore in the response to R&I ref: G12 RR ref: G22, the Applicants have presented several reasons why the data included in the Lamb et al. (2024) review of wind farm studies may be unreliable and unrepresentative for the current context. For these reasons the Applicants continue to consider displacement and mortality rates of 50% and 1%, respectively, as appropriate and precautionary'.*	
G16	The Applicants have not followed the SNCB advised approach for assessing gannet collision risk. We advise that gannet collision is assessed using an avoidance rate of 99.3%, along with a range of macro-avoidance rates between 65-85%.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicants have updated their gannet collision risk assessment in accordance with Natural England's advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 26).	
G17	We advise that disturbance and displacement impacts are screened into the cumulative assessment for Red-throated Diver and relevant mitigation measures identified e.g. use of existing shipping lanes until beyond 2km of the SPA.	February 27th Submission Natural England welcome that a cumulative assessment has been provided for impacts on red-throated diver, however we advise that clarification is needed on how the values presented have been arrived at. See Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 Please see Change Request Appendix L of our Deadline 3 submission for further advice on impacts to Red Throated Diver. Deadline 4	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 27). Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G17). Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		The Applicant has indicated that they will review the assessment values and update as needed at Deadline 4. Natural England will provide further comment at Deadline 5. We can also confirm that, as noted by the Applicant, the reference to array displacement in our Appendix G2 comment was made in error. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicant's updated assessment.		
G18	Further consideration should be given to potential mitigation measures to reduce impacts on bird features, such as array reductions, changes to design and layout of arrays, or increasing the hub height of turbines. Hotspot modelling of seabird densities and distributions in the study area may help to identify areas where impacts are particularly high.	February 27th Submission No Change. Natural England continue to advise that further consideration is given to potential mitigation measures to reduce impacts on seabird features, such as array reductions, changes to design and layout of arrays, or increasing the hub height of turbines. See Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change. The Applicant maintains their position that no additional mitigation is required. Natural England maintain our previous advice. We will provide further comment at Deadline 5 following review of the Applicant's ISH written summaries. Deadline 5 No Change. The Applicant maintains their position that no additional mitigation is required. Natural England maintain our previous advice and have provided further advice in response to ISH Action 7 in Appendix M5 of our Deadline 5 submission. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position	The Applicants direct Natural England to **The Applicants' Responses to Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G7): *'Mitigation relating to air gaps has been applied in accordance with the Round 4 plan level Habitats Regulation Assessment (The Crown Estate 2022) whereby, to reduce potential collisions with birds in flight (particularly kittiwakes), the clearance of the blades above the water was set ats a minimum 34m above MSL. This mitigation measure has been adhered to within the design envelopes of the Projects.* *As part of the progression of project design from the Preliminary Environmental Information Report to the application stage the array area boundaries were reduced and refined. A number of factors, including bird distribution data, were considered as part of the boundary refinement exercise. Density mapping data based on the site-specific aerial survey data was collated and examined to indicate areas within The Crown Estate lease options that showed higher and lower densities of birds, and this was used alongside other environmental and technical information to enact the boundary change. An outline of the factors considered in the boundary refinement exercise was presented as part of the minutes from the ornithology ETG meeting 6/2/24). The refinements to the array area boundaries was, therefore, undertaken to help reduce impacts on important bird populations.'* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref:G18 RR ref: G28): '*The Applicants consider that a robust assessment has been provided and this has demonstrated that the Projects will not have any effects on ornithological interests. On this basis the Applicants do not consider any additional mitigation is required. See response to R&I ref: G18 RR ref: G63.'* G18 RR ref: G63 – '*Mitigation relating to air gaps has been applied in accordance with the Round 4 plan level HRA (The Crown Estate 2022) whereby, to reduce potential collisions with birds in flight (particularly kittiwakes), the clearance of the blades above the water was set at a minimum 34m above MSL. This mitigation measure was committed to by the Applicants early in the strategic compensation process and has been adhered to within the design envelopes of the Projects. The Applicants continued and are continuing to review the consenting, technical and commercial feasibility of increasing the minimum air gap throughout the pre-application and examination phases. The Applicants note that*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No change. The Applicant's Responses to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] confirms that they will not present hotspot modelling as 'any further reductions in the developable area within the lease boundaries would risk making the Projects economically unviable.' Whilst we note this argument, it is not within our field of expertise to comment on. Natural England maintains our previous advice [REP5-060] on the use of hotspot modelling and highlight its usage by other projects e.g. Outer Dowsing. We therefore consider that agreement will not be reached on this matter within Examination.	*whilst increasing the lower blade tip clearance to minimise ornithological impact naturally leads to an increase to the upper tip height, this also has a consequential increase in the risk of impact. The Applicants have submitted an **Ornithological Mitigation Option Report** [AS-118] which considered the feasibility of increasing the air gap/hub height. The conclusion of this work is that increasing the air gap beyond 34m is not currently feasible due to the increased consenting, engineering, and financial risks to such an extent as to make the Projects commercially unviable. Further justification is presented in the **Ornithological Mitigation Option Report** [AS-118]. As part of the progression of project design from the PEIR to the application stage the Array Area boundaries were reduced and refined. A number of factors, including bird distribution data, were considered as part of the boundary refinement exercise. Density mapping data based on the site specific aerial survey data was collated and examined to indicate areas within The Crown Estate lease options that showed higher and lower densities of birds, and this was used alongside other environmental and technical information to enact the boundary change. An outline of the factors considered in the boundary refinement exercise was presented as part of the minutes from the ornithology ETG meeting on the 6th February 2024 (available in **Appendix F1 - Minutes of meetings – ETG** [APP-043]). The refinements to the Array Area boundaries was, therefore, undertaken to help reduce impacts on important bird populations. Any reductions or changes to the array design or layout must be considered against other environmental, technical, and engineering constraints, as well as benefits to ornithology. For example, the layout and site design must include requirements by MCA and Trinity House for navigational safety, including the provision of Search and Rescue lanes. Furthermore, The Crown Estate Lease requirement to meet a minimum specific power density would make further amendments to site design challenging at this stage. The Applicants must seek to achieve as close to the minimum power density of 5MW/km2 in order to be competitive in the highly competitive bidding process for a Contract For Difference, without which the Projects may be delayed or not be constructed at all. The Applicants consider that a robust assessment has been provided and, with the exception of those SPA features for which an in-combination adverse effect on integrity has been conceded, this has demonstrated that the Projects will not have any significant or AEoI of ornithological interests. On this basis the Applicants do not consider any additional mitigation is required.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants refer Natural England to Table 2-20 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] regarding responses on ornithology mitigation. End of Examination Position The Applicants highlight that **Appendix A - Offshore Ornithology Year 1 and 2 Combined Spatial Plots** [REP7-137] document submitted at Deadline 7 provides examples of the site-specific aerial survey data that was collated and examined (pre-application) to indicate what (if any) areas within The Crown Estate lease options showed higher and lower densities of birds. The Applicants consider that the detail presented in **Appendix A - Offshore Ornithology Year 1 and 2 Combined Spatial Plots** [REP7-137] sufficiently demonstrates that all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid potential areas of high abundance for ornithological receptors, and that additional	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			survey work would not provide any material evidence for which to inform any further refinement of the Projects Array Areas. Regarding the potential commitment to other mitigation measures, the Applicants maintain the position as outlined in Table 2-20 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052].	
G19	We cannot agree with the EIA conclusions presented due to there being outstanding concerns with several aspects of the assessment, including: -baseline mortality rates and EIA reference populations used (G19) -guillemot seasonality (G24) -gannet collision risk (G26) -approach taken to combining the impacts of the two arrays (G11) We advise that updated assessments are provided in line with SNCB Best Practice Guidance.	<u>February 27th Submission</u> Natural England cannot agree with the EIA conclusions presented due to there being outstanding concerns with several aspects of the assessment, including: • Discrepancies in cumulative impact figures (G54) • Lack of PVAs to assess cumulative impacts resulting in increases in background mortality rates of more than 1% (G56) • Lack of assessment of cumulative displacement impacts on auks between the arrays. (G12) <u>Deadline 3:</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 4:</u> Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review of the cumulative impacts and updated PVAs will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. <u>Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position</u> Issue satisfactorily resolved. Natural England have some outstanding concerns which we would ideally like to be addressed, however we acknowledge that they will not affect the assessment conclusions. Please see Appendix G5 for Natural England's updated EIA conclusions.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G29): *'As noted above the following revisions will be provided mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology EIA Update** [document reference 12.5]:* • *RR-039: G19 - these revised demographic rates were provided too late for the assessment and an update for these will be submitted.* • *RR-039: G24 - the Applicants will provide updated assessment following this new guidance.* • *RR-039: G26 - the Applicants will provide the additional collision risks for gannet as requested although these will make only a small difference to the conclusions reached.* • *RR-039: G11 - As per the response above the Applicants have explained the reasons for the approach taken and why the assessment is considered robust, nonetheless updated assessment for the East and West sites combined will be provided.'* <u>Deadline 3</u> The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G19, RR ref: G29): *'The Applicants will review the cumulative impact figures and provide PVAs for impacts as appropriate. The Applicants do not agree with the basis for Natural England's position on auk displacement between the arrays (see response to comment R&I ref: G12 RR ref: G22) and do not consider there to be justification for consideration of displacement beyond the standard accepted buffer distance of 2km.'* <u>Deadline 6</u> The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter and direct Natural England to the Applicants' responses on the outstanding concerns in Table 2-21 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. <u>End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants consider this matter closed following Natural England's agreement at Deadline 5.	
G20	Further detail and clarity is needed on the foraging ranges and SPA populations used to calculate breeding season apportioning proportions. We	<u>February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position</u>	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 31).	

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	advise that the more up-to-date and contemporaneous SPA populations from Seabirds Count data (Burnell et al 2023) should be used to determine proportions for apportioning during the breeding season, rather than SPA citation populations, unless more recent counts are available.	Issue Resolved. The Applicants have updated their apportioning of guillemot and razorbill impacts to FFC SPA in line with SNCB advice.		
G21	The adult baseline mortality for FFC SPA gannet should be recalculated using the 8.1% mortality rate from Horswill and Robinson (2015), and the rest of the assessment of impacts on this population adjusted accordingly.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue largely resolved. The Applicants have updated the adult baseline mortality rates for gannet, kittiwake, and razorbill to reflect our advice. However, we disagree with the Applicants characterisation of these trends in the RIAA. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 32): '*This adjustment will be made to the assessment and presented mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6].'* Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that they '*do not consider these comments to merit a re-submission of the RIAA and ES chapter on their own, however the Applicants will be reviewing the assessment to determine if updates are required more generally for Deadline 4 (i.e. for other comments received). If an update is deemed appropriate then the text referred to here by Natural England will be amended, in an updated RIAA at Deadline 4'.* End of Examination Position The **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] was updated at Deadline 4 to resolve Natural England's comment on this topic. As such the Applicants consider this matter is closed.	
G22	The adult baseline mortality for FFC SPA kittiwake should be recalculated using the Clarkson et al (2022) population estimate, and the rest of the assessment of impacts on this population adjusted accordingly.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue largely resolved. The Applicants have updated the adult baseline mortality rates for gannet, kittiwake, and razorbill to reflect our advice. However, we disagree with the Applicants characterisation of these trends in the RIAA. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further details.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 33): '*This adjustment will be made to the assessment and presented mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6].'* Deadline 3 See response in Point G21 of this table at Deadline 3. End of Examination Position The **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] was updated at Deadline 4 to resolve Natural England's comment on this topic. As such the Applicants consider this matter is closed.	
G23	The adult baseline mortality and breeding season apportioning for FFC SPA puffin should be recalculated using the Clarkson et al (2022) count,	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 34):	

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	and the rest of the assessment of impacts on this population adjusted accordingly.	Issue largely resolved. Natural England welcomes the updated calculation of adult baseline mortality for puffin at FFC SPA and note that, while the Applicants have still not followed Natural England's advice, the discrepancy is unlikely to lead to a material difference in the impact values.	*'This adjustment will be made to the assessment and presented mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6].'* Deadline 3 See response in Point G21 of this table at Deadline 3. End of Examination Position The **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] was updated at Deadline 4 to resolve Natural England's comment on this topic. As such the Applicants consider this matter is closed.	
G24	The adult baseline mortality for FFC SPA razorbill should be recalculated using the Clarkson et al (2022) count, and the rest of the assessment of impacts on this population adjusted accordingly.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue largely resolved. The Applicants have updated the adult baseline mortality rates for gannet, kittiwake, and razorbill to reflect our advice. However, we disagree with the Applicants characterisation of these trends in the RIAA. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 35): *'This adjustment will be made to the assessment and presented mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6].'* Deadline 3 See response in Point G21 of this table at Deadline 3. End of Examination Position The **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] was updated at Deadline 4 to resolve Natural England's comment on this topic. As such the Applicants consider this matter is closed.	
G25	We welcome that the Applicants have provided impact values with 100% adult apportioning to SPA colonies in line with SNCB advice, alongside their own approach using stable age structure. We disagree with the use of a theoretical generalised stable age structure to apportion impacts to adults from SPA colonies as it is unlikely to represent actual proportions of adults present and may lead to underestimation of impacts. Our conclusions on impacts will therefore be based on the values provided in line with SNCB advice.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position To note. No further action needed.	The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment.	
G26	The results of displacement assessments for auks using Natural England's advised range of displacement and mortality rates should be used to determine SPA features for Population Viability	February 27th Submission See G43. Deadline 3	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 37). Deadline 3	

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	Analysis (PVA), and when assessing potential for AEoI at SPAs.	No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review of PVA's will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicant's updated assessment.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G26,G43. RR ref: G37, G56). Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	
G27	We advise that for apportioning of guillemot impacts to FFC SPA, August and September be treated as a separate 'chick rearing and moult' season, with seasonal mean peaks and impacts calculated accordingly.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicants updated assessment.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 38).	
G28	Clarification is needed on the guillemot apportioning method. Natural England advice is that adult proportions of guillemot during August and September be calculated according to the published productivity data for guillemot at FFC SPA during the years that the baseline surveys were undertaken (Cope et al 2021, Cope et al 2022).	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicants updated assessment.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 39).	
G29	We do not agree with the use of the Biologically Defined Minimum Population Scale (BDMPS) method for apportioning razorbill impacts to FFC SPA in the post-breeding migration season. Based on the published productivity data for razorbill at FFC SPA during the years that the baseline surveys were undertaken (Cope et al 2021, Cope et al 2022), and allowing for the possibility of some degree of dilution by adults from other colonies to North, we advise that 69.93% of razorbill are apportioned as breeding adults at FFC SPA during the post-breeding migration season.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicants updated assessment.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 40).	

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G30	We advise that the Applicants check that the correct minimum distance between FFC SPA and the arrays has been applied when considering apportioning rates to FFC SPA for kittiwake.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicants updated assessment.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 41).	
G31	The combined impacts of collision and displacement on FFC SPA gannet in the Applicants assessment for the arrays combined results in an increase in mortality rate of 0.9%. If when calculated according to Natural England's advised approach the impacts of the arrays combined on FFC SPA gannet exceed the 1% threshold, then PVA should be undertaken for impacts of the projects alone.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcomes that the Applicants have undertaken PVA to assess the impacts of the projects alone on FFC SPA gannet.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 42).	
G32	We advise that PVAs are carried out for the impacts of the projects alone (i.e. DBS East and West combined) on kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill at FFC SPA, as the 1% mortality rate threshold is exceeded when assessments are conducted in line with SNCB advice.	February 27th Submission Issue Progressed. Natural England welcomes that the Applicants have undertaken PVAs to assess the impacts of the projects alone on guillemot, kittiwake, and gannet at FFC SPA. The advice provided in our Relevant Representations [AS-048] still applies to that of razorbill at FFC SPA, which is yet to be provided. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the additional PVA will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcomes the Applicant's updated PVAs for these species.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 43). Deadline 3: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G21,G22, G24. RR ref: G32, G33, G35). Deadline 4 The Applicants submitted updated PVAs [REP4-034] at Deadline 4. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

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G33	There is a discrepancy between the annual operational displacement impacts of the arrays combined on FFC SPA gannet presented in Table 9.12 (13.17) compared to the text in paragraph 109 (12.5). We advise this is checked and the appropriate values are used to calculate the impacts of displacement and collision combined.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicants have confirmed this was an error and the correct values have been used in the assessment.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 45).	
G34	The descriptions of red-throated diver densities in the area of the Greater Wash SPA crossed by the cable corridor given in Chapter 7.12 and in Chapter 6.1 do not correspond. These should be checked and assessments updated as needed.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicants updated assessment.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 47).	
G35	The assessment of impacts on red-throated diver in the Greater Wash SPA does not consider impacts of the reduction in habitat resulting from disturbance/displacement during cable installation. We advise that the implications of cable installation on extent of available habitat for red-throated diver in the Greater Wash SPA is assessed and robust mitigation brought forward.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Natural England have reviewed the Applicants' Responses and agree that in this instance habitat reduction does not need to be assessed separately to disturbance/displacement for the cable installation works. However, please see G50 (G64) and Appendix G2 for further comment on mitigation for red-throated diver disturbance.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 48): '*The Applicants will review this potential impact and update the assessment as appropriate mid-November 2024 in the* ***Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update*** *[document reference 12.6].*' Deadline 3 The Applicants state in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that '*The region of the SPA which the Offshore Export Cable Corridor crosses has low densities of red-throated diver recorded, and the nearshore sections were not identified as within the species' distribution within the documentation that detailed the scientific case for the classification of the Greater Wash as a potential Special I.D. Ref Comment Recommendation Risk Applicants' Comment Protection Area (Natural England and JNCC 201640). The peak density of red-throated diver within the overlap of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor and the SPA is between 0.68 and 0.87 birds/km2, indicating up to 17 to 22 divers could be displaced at any given time during installation of the Offshore Export Cable Corridor. Installation of the trenchless crossing (e.g. Horizontal Directional Drill) exit pits and Offshore Export Cables for the projects within the Greater Wash SPA would occur as single isolated events.* *As such, any disturbance of red-throated diver individuals would occur in discrete events, and would not represent a continuous and sustained period of disturbance*'. (See Table 2-13). End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England being reached on the remaining red-throated diver matter (see G50 below) the Applicants consider this matter is agreed.	
G36	The initial population sizes used in the PVA for kittiwake and razorbill at FFC SPA are 91,008 and 30,673 respectively. We advise that the appropriate	February 27th Submission	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 49).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	population sizes to use are the 2022 count figures of 89,148 (kittiwake) and 61,345 (razorbill) (Clarkson et al 202210). The PVAs for kittiwake and razorbill at FFC SPA should be re-run using the appropriate initial population sizes (Clarkson et al 202210).	No Change. Natural England maintain our advice that the most recent population estimate should be used as the starting population for PVAs run for this population. See G57 and Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Issue progressed. Natural England acknowledge that the PVA updates provided in Annex A of [AS-085] were missed in our Deadline 2 review. We welcome that the kittiwake PVA was run with the correct starting population size. We will provide further comment at Deadline 5 following the Applicant's submission of the remaining PVA updates at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]). Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicant's updated PVAs.	Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G36. RR ref: G49). Deadline 4 The Applicants submitted updated PVAs [REP4-034] at Deadline 4. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	
G37	In-combination assessments have not been carried out for a number of SPA features. We advise that it would be best practice for the Applicants to carry out in-combination assessments for all SPA features that have been screened in for assessment. As a minimum, we consider that in-combination assessments should be carried out for all species that meet the 1% baseline mortality threshold (calculated according to SNCB guidance), specifically guillemot at Farne Islands SPA, and Red-throated diver at the Greater Wash SPA. We consider there would also be merit in in-combination assessments being carried out for puffins at Farne Islands SPA and FFC SPA.	February 27th Submission Issue progressed. The Applicants have provided in-combination assessments for guillemot and puffin at the Farne Islands SPA, however, we have outstanding concerns with some aspects of the assessment methodology. The Applicants have also included an in-combination assessment for Red-Throated Diver in the Greater Wash SPA. Whilst we do not fully agree with the approach taken for the RTD assessment (lack of consideration of impacts from other projects), due to the low predicted impacts we do not consider it would materially change our advice. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 50): '*The Applicants will provide the additional in-combination assessment mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6] for the features and SPAs identified by Natural England (guillemot at Farne Islands SPA, Red-throated diver at the Greater Wash SPA and puffins at Farne Islands SPA and FFC SPA)* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028). See the response provided for Point G26 in **Table 3-8** of this document. Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-058: G7): '*The Applicants are submitting a revised guillemot in-combination assessment for the Farne Islands SPA in the **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [document reference: 6.1] at Deadline 6 incorporating Natural England's advice on projects to include in this assessment.'*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review and assessment updates will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the ExA Questions [REP3-027]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. We welcome that the Applicant has submitted in-combination assessments for guillemot at Farne Islands SPA. However there are still outstanding concerns around this assessment. Please see Appendix G5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. The Applicant has provided an updated in-combination assessment with the relevant projects screened in for Farnes SPA in the updated RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 - Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5) [REP6-009] submitted at Deadline 6. Whilst some discrepancies remain in the final totals, we consider they are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions.	End of Examination Position Following submission of the **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 - Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] at Deadline 6 to address Natural England's comment on this matter, the Applicants consider the matter closed.	
G38	The impacts of several relevant Tier 4 projects have been left out of the in-combination assessments, including Outer Dowsing, Five Estuaries and North Falls offshore wind farms (OWF). Dogger Bank D OWF should also be included as a Tier 6 project. The in-combination assessment should be updated to include all relevant projects.	February 27th Submission Issue progressed. We welcome that the Applicants have included all relevant Tier 4 projects in their in-combination assessment, however we advise that the Applicants collaborate with other Round 4 developers to agree on how updated impact values (based on SNCB advice) can be efficiently incorporated as the Examinations of these projects progress, and that the Applicants updates the Examination at an appropriate juncture.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 51): '*The list of wind farms included in the assessment will be reviewed and updated as appropriate mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6]. It is expected this will include Outer Dowsing, Five Estuaries and North Falls as these have submitted their final applications, however it is important to note that some of their estimated impacts are subject to requests for revision by Natural England as these projects are also currently in Examination. These totals are expected to be preliminary until final agreements have been reached between each project and Natural England, which may not be until determination by the Secretary of State.*' Deadline 3	

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		Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. It is Natural England's understanding that Dogger Bank D Section 42 PEIR is to be consulted on from 6 June - 1 August 2025 and therefore within the timeframes of this Examination. Deadline 5 No Change. Please see Appendix G5 for outstanding projects that Natural England advise the Applicant includes in the in-combination assessments. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Whilst the DBD PEIR is now in the public domain through a Section 42 consultation, we consider it would not be proportionate to update the in-combination assessment before the close of the Examination. Therefore we advise that when determining DBS windfarms the Secretary of State considers Dogger Bank D in their HRA.	The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G21,G22, G24. RR ref: G32, G33, G35): *'The Applicants will continue to track the impacts for other projects currently in examination and consider the need to revise cumulative and in-combination assessments as appropriate.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants agree that it would not be proportionate to update the in-combination assessment before the close of the Examination to information presented in the DBD PEIR. Consideration of the DBD PEIR has been presented in **The Applicant's Consideration of the Dogger Bank D Preliminary Environmental Information Report** [REP7-133] submitted at Deadline 7.	
G39	The Applicants have excluded projects for which kittiwake compensation measures are required (Hornsea Three, Norfolk Boreas, Norfolk Vanguard, East Anglia Two, East Anglia One North, Hornsea Four, SEP&DEP) from their in-combination assessment. The Applicants should present in-combination assessments that both include and exclude compensated-for projects, for FFC SPA kittiwake.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. The Applicants have presented in-combination totals both including and excluding compensated-for projects.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 52).	

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G40	We do not support Hornsea 4 guillemot impacts being excluded from in-combination totals, as a high degree of uncertainty remains regarding the likely effectiveness of available measures to fully compensate for their impacts. We advise that in-combination totals should be presented both with and without the impacts of compensated-for projects due to the current uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of compensatory measures for auks.	<u>February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position</u> Issue Resolved. The Applicants have presented in-combination totals both including and excluding compensated-for projects.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 53).	
G41	The in-combination totals calculated for impacts on kittiwake, guillemot razorbill and gannet at FFC SPA do not appear to reflect the combined impacts of the arrays with other relevant projects. We note that the most recent agreed in-combination totals are for DEP&SEP. We advise that the in-combination totals for impacts on kittiwake, guillemot, razorbill and gannet at FFC SPA be recalculated, taking into account the impacts of all relevant projects (see G51&52), the DEP&SEP values, and any updated assessments resulting from advice within this Representation.	<u>February 27th Submission</u> Issue progressed. Please refer to R&I points G58 and G59 for species specific comments. <u>Deadline 3</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 4</u> Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review and assessment updates will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the ExA Questions [REP3-027]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. <u>Deadline 5</u> No Change. The in-combination totals still do not appear to reflect the combined impacts of the arrays with other relevant projects. Please see Appendix G5 for further detail. <u>Deadline 6</u> No change. The Applicant presented Natural England with their reasoning for the remaining discrepancies in a meeting on 9th June 2025. We understand the Applicant intends to formally submit this clarification at Deadline 6. Without prejudice to our formal review, we consider this has the potential to satisfactorily resolve this issue.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 54): '*The Applicants will review the **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4** [APP-048] and provide additional assessment as appropriate mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6].*' <u>Deadline 6</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-058: G5 and REP5-058: G6): **G5**: *The Applicants have very carefully checked their kittiwake cumulative and in-combination tables and can confidently confirm that, apart from minor variations (e.g. approx. 0.1 for a small number of older projects due to rounding variations) and a discrepancy of a single kittiwake collision for Outer Dowsing (15.5 instead of 14.5, which changed between that project's original submission and their final one), these values are correct for the current SNCB avoidance rate guidance.* *The SEP and DEP total for kittiwake collisions apportioned to the Flamborough and Filey Coast (FFC) Special Protection Area (SPA) of 394 referred to by Natural England (REP8-038 of that project's submissions) reflects the total obtained when the older avoidance rate of 99.2% is applied, not using the current avoidance rate of 99.23%. Furthermore, DEP and SEP omitted impacts for projects subject to compensation requirements (Hornsea 3, Norfolk Vanguard, Norfolk Boreas, East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO). Therefore Natural England estimated the collisions for these aforementioned compensation projects and added it to the DEP and SEP figure. Natural England estimated the extra mortality to be 101.1. But notably, Natural England (REP8-102 of the DEP and SEP submissions) stated in relation to this figure:* *It should be noted that the 101.1 birds have not been corrected for the revised Avoidance Rate for kittiwake, and so is a precautionary total.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. We have reviewed the additional clarifications provided by the Applicant in REP6-052 on remaining discrepancies in in-combination totals between projects, and agree that they are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions. See our Deadline 7 cover letter for further detail.	*Hence this value (101) was calculated using an avoidance rate of 98.9% and the avoidance rate has been revised twice since then: 98.9% was replaced by 99.2% (as used by DEP and SEP for the other projects) and has now been further refined to 99.23% (as applied by the Projects).* *When the values presented by DEP and SEP (Table 10-2 of the DEP and SEP submission REP8-038) for all wind farms except those subject to compensation are adjusted from the avoidance rate of 99.2% (as applied at that time) to the current joint SNCB advised rate of 99.23% the values the Applicants presented in Table 9-23 of the Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 4) [REP4-016] are obtained (i.e. these figures are identical save for the avoidance rate adjustment). And the same applies when the compensation project collision estimates (taken from each project's consented values) are adjusted for the latest avoidance rate advice, the values presented in the Applicants' submission (REP4-016, Table 9-23) are obtained.* *The Applicants have reviewed Natural England's Outer Dowsing submission1 and note that the values presented for kittiwake collisions therein were also taken from the DEP and SEP submission without adjustment (i.e. they have not been updated in-line with the current joint SNCB guidance on avoidance rates) and hence the values are similarly incorrect as outlined for DEP and SEP above (please see Appendix A for the chain of documents that link the DEP and SEP submissions to Outer Dowsing's).* *The above was explained to Natural England in a call on the 9th June 2025 and followed up with the same supporting information presented here.* *The Applicants accept that the FFC SPA kittiwake collision estimate presented by the Applicants for Outer Dowsing has been revised since this table was collated, from 14.5 (in the Outer Dowsing original submission; APP-235 of the Outer Dowsing submissions) to 15.5 in their final submission (REP6-028). However, as the addition of a single kittiwake collision makes no material difference to the assessment it is not proposed to resubmit the RIAA or Population Viability Assessment (PVA).* **G6**: *'The Applicants have reviewed the Outer Dowsing submissions and note that the values included in RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 4) [REP4-016] (submitted on the 25th April) reflected those in the Outer Dowsing original submission and not those in the Outer Dowsing final submission. However, since the latter was not submitted until the 4th April, leaving less than 3 weeks for the Applicants to make any updates the Applicants would note that it is not surprising that these (small) changes in Outer Dowsing's figures (11.5 additional guillemot and 13.8 additional razorbill) had not been incorporated in the Applicants' Deadline 4 submission.* *This situation highlights the challenges facing projects being assessed in parallel with others (which applies to Outer Dowsing, North Falls and Five Estuaries) all of which may be revising their impact estimates at each procedural deadline. Given that there is no guarantee that these regular updates will not continue throughout the examination the Applicants do not consider regular revision and re-revision in this manner to be an efficient use of time for either the Applicants, Stakeholders or Examiners.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			Furthermore, as acknowledged by Natural England: these discrepancies are not likely to affect the assessment conclusions or compensation requirements *Therefore, no further updates are proposed at this stage of the Examination.'* End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England that further changes are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
G42	For the in-combination assessment of displacement impacts, the Applicants have presented apportioned abundance estimates for other projects, and then presented minimum and maximum displacement impacts in the text. The full methods and displacement matrices for these assessments have not been provided, and it is therefore not possible for us to evaluate the methods or the potential range of predicted impacts. We advise that the Applicants present the details of the in-combination displacement assessment in full to allow the methods used and full range of predicted impacts to be evaluated.	February 27th Submission No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review and assessment updates will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No Change. Please see Appendix G5 for outstanding issues in regards to the in-combination assessments. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. We have reviewed the additional clarifications provided by the Applicant in REP6-052 on remaining discrepancies in in-combination totals between projects, and agree that they are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions. See our Deadline 7 cover letter for further detail.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 55): '*The Applicants will review the* ***Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4*** *[APP-048] and provide additional assessment mid-November 2024 in the* ***Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update*** *[document reference 12.6].*' Deadline 3: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G42. RR ref: G55): '*The Applicants will review the in-combination displacement tables and update as necessary at Deadline 4. However, in advance of this review the Applicants note that in-combination tables often vary between applications due to presentational differences, and these are typically explained in the accompanying text. Furthermore, the Applicants are of the opinion that revising these tables will have no material effects on the assessment conclusions and note Natural England has made no suggestion to the contrary. So these aspects should not be the cause of any delay in Natural England finalising their position on the applications' impacts on ornithological interests.*' Deadline 6 See the Applicants' responses to G5 and G6 at Deadline 6 in Point G41 above. G7 is reiterated below (**he Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]). **G7**: '*The Applicants are submitting a revised guillemot in-combination assessment for the Farne Islands SPA in the* ***RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)*** *[document reference: 6.1] at Deadline 6 incorporating Natural England's advice on projects to include in this assessment.* End of Examination Position Following submission of the **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 - Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] at Deadline 6 to address Natural England's comment on this matter, the Applicants consider the matter closed.'	

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G43	While Natural England appreciate the Applicants presenting PVA results for guillemot and razorbill considering both ends of Natural England's advised range for displacement and mortality rates (i.e. from 30% displacement and 1% mortality to 70% displacement and 10% mortality) as well as Natural England's advised adult apportioning rates, we note that only a limited number of results are presented from within this range. We advise the Applicants to present the results of the full range of displacement impacts on guillemot and razorbill in the PVA modelling.	February 27th Submission No Change. Natural England advise that the PVAs run to assess the predicted impacts of the projects on guillemot and razorbill populations encompass the full range of Natural England's advised displacement and mortality. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review of PVAs will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. This has been largely addressed, however results have not been provided for in-combination FFC SPA totals with Hornsea 4 using 70% displacement and 5% mortality. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. Whilst the Applicant has not provided the full range of displacement impacts, outputs from both ends of the impact range as well as for 70% displacement and 2% mortality have been provided.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 56): '*The Applicants will review the **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4** [APP-048] and provide additional assessment as appropriate. However, the Applicants require greater clarity from Natural England on what combinations of displacement and mortality they would like to see in the PVA as 'the full range' from 30-70% displaced and 1-10% mortality would potentially require a considerable number of PVA scenarios to be run, depending on the increments adopted.*' Deadline 3: The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088). See the response provided for Point G26 in **Table 3-8** of this document. Deadline 6 See the Applicants' responses to G6 at Deadline 6 in Point G41 above. End of Examination Position Following submission of the **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 - Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] at Deadline 6 to address Natural England's comment on this matter, the Applicants consider the matter closed.	
G44	Interpretation of PVA results: Counterfactual of Population Size When interpreting results of PVAs, assessments should focus on both the counterfactual of population growth rate (CGR) and counterfactual of population size (CPS) to quantify the relative	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No change. To note.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 57): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position on this matter and consider it important to note that they provided the full range of outputs from the PVA in the **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4** [APP-048] as advised by Natural England in their guidance. However, the Applicants' position remains the same as presented in the Application,*	

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	changes in population response to anthropogenic impacts, as they have been shown to be the least sensitive metrics to misspecification of the population trend and demographic rates used in the PVA model. Our integrity judgements will take into account both the CPS and CGR metrics to quantify the relative changes in population response to impacts.		*namely that greater weight should be placed on CPGR when interpreting the results of density-independent models and greater weight should be placed on CPS when interpreting density dependent models. Since Natural England's advice on conducting seabird PVA is to undertake these as density independent models, the Applicants consider the CPGR to be the more robust metric to use. This position is based on the considerable experience of their consultants who have spent over 25 years developing and interpreting population models and their outputs'.*	
G45	Interpretation of PVA results: use of mean peak abundance estimates In the absence of more robust empirical evidence on within-year and between-year variations in abundance, and on turnover rates, Natural England continue to advise that the use of seasonal mean peak abundance estimates is necessary and appropriate.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No change. We maintain our previous advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 58): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position on this matter, but maintain that when taken together Natural England's approach to assessment results in overly precautionary impacts (see RR-039: G 9).*'	
G46	Interpretation of PVA results: characterisation of 1% mortality rate Natural England disagree with the Applicants statement that a 1% mortality rate for the displacement assessment on gannet (and referenced for other species) is "not based on any scientific evidence". We refer the Applicants to our comments on the characterisation of NE advice in G25.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No change. We maintain our previous advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 59): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position on this matter, but maintain that when taken together Natural England's approach to assessment results in overly precautionary impacts (see RR-039: G 9).'*	
G47	Interpretation of PVA results: use of as built parameters We do not consider it appropriate to reduce impact estimates by considering as-built parameters unless those parameters are legally secured. Speculation of impacts from 'as built' scenarios in in-combination/cumulative impact assessments are of little value unless legal agreements are put in place to ensure existing projects will not expand further. Without such agreements, there is no option other than to use impacts from consented designs in in-combination and cumulative assessments.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No change. Natural England note that we are actively engaged with industry in considering ways that 'as-built' parameters can be used within assessments. However, at present, we are unable to consider appropriate the use of as-built parameters in cumulative and in-combination assessments unless these parameters can be legally secured.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 60): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position on this matter, but consider it fails to recognise that wind farms are only consented for single construction campaigns and typically make full spatial use of their sites. Consequently, there are compelling reasons for accepting as-built wind farm impacts rather than consented for most if not all operational wind farms. The aspect is further illustration of the over-precaution in Natural England's approach to impact assessment. The above explanation notwithstanding, it should be clarified that the Applicants did not incorporate as-built impacts in their assessment but rather used the consented impacts as advised by Natural England*'.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
G48	Interpretation of PVA results: PVAs run as "closed populations" There is currently an absence of robust empirical evidence on the levels of immigration and emigration affecting the relevant seabird populations. In the absence of such evidence, it is impossible to construct population models that reliably represent metapopulation dynamics, and incorporating unproven assumptions about immigration and emigration into population models has the potential to underestimate development impacts on seabird populations. No assumptions can be made about unquantified resilience in wider populations, particularly given the many pressures acting on seabird populations throughout the region.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position No change. We maintain our previous advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 61): '*The Applicants agree that rates of exchange between colonies are poorly understood, but that does not negate the Applicants' position which is that this omission (i.e. treating populations as isolated) does result in more precautionary results.*'	
G49	Interpretation of PVA results for FFC SPA gannet, kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill In the Applicants interpretation of the PVA results for in-combination impacts on gannet, kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill at FFC SPA, they cite recent population growth at the SPA as a reason for concluding no AEoI is likely. Whilst we do not dispute the evidence of population growth at the colony in past years, we do not consider it appropriate to assume the same growth rate will continue over the next 30 years. It is highly likely that the populations will experience density-dependent mechanisms over the lifetime of the Project, and there are uncertainties about the long-term population impacts of HPAI and a wide range of other environmental pressures. We note that the Applicants have acknowledged the importance of considering density dependence and other pressures including HPAI and climate change elsewhere in the Application, but they have not considered these in their interpretation of the PVA results. Further, recent surveys have shown that UK gannet, kittiwake and guillemot populations declined by 25%, 18% and 20%	February 27th Submission No change. Natural England advise that the Applicants consider realistic assessments of current and future seabird population trends, considering all relevant evidence, when assessing the significance of the predicted impacts of the projects. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position No change. Natural England note that the Applicant has not considered potential future changes in seabird population trends (due to density dependence, climate change impacts, and HPAI impacts) when assessing the interpretation of the PVA results, as previously advised by Natural England. However, whilst we would welcome this	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 62): '*The Applicants are surprised by Natural England's comment that the assessment failed to take density dependence into account in the PVA since their long-standing position on this matter is that there is insufficient information on density dependence in seabird populations to permit its inclusion in PVA, and when such models have been included in assessments Natural England has been very clear that they do not support their use for this purpose. It is therefore somewhat contradictory for Natural England to advise the Applicants to consider density dependent effects while also being advised to undertake density independent PVA.* *While there was considerable and justifiable concern that HPAI would have large impacts on seabird populations, the reality appears to have been much less significant than feared and (with some exceptions) this appears to have resulted in temporary impacts on population growth rather than any long-lasting effects. It is also notable that the study cited by Natural England (Tremlett et al. 2024) reported that the gannet population at FFC SPA increased across the period in question (albeit this was the only monitored colony which increased) and the UK population of kittiwake actually increased overall by 10% (contrary to Natural England's statement that there had been an 18% decline). The populations of guillemot and kittiwake at FFC SPA were not included in Tremlett et al. (2024), however plot counts at the SPA monitored every year since 2009 by the RSPB found that for guillemot the positive trend (plot counts began) was maintained in 2023 while the kittiwake plot count, which has been largely stable in recent years, had a small decrease of around 4% compared with the previous year (Butcher et al. 2023). Therefore, it appears that for the FFC SPA colonies there is no need to make allowance for the population level effects of HPAI in the PVA, not least because the counterfactual outputs are robust to such considerations*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	respectively between the results of the last seabird census which covered the period between 2015 and 2021 (Burnell et al 20234), and the summer of 2023 (Tremlett et al 20245). Natural England advise that the Applicants consider realistic assessments of current and future population trends, considering all relevant evidence, when interpreting the results of updated PVAs.	being addressed, it will not materially impact our assessment conclusions. Please see our response to ISH Action 10 in Appendix M5 for further detail.	Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G49. RR ref: G62): *'The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position on this matter, and agree that for some species and some colonies declines have been significant, however for those of primary interest here such as gannet at FFC SPA the consequences have been much less concerning than feared. Butcher et al. (2024) report on the gannet counts at FFC SPA in 2022, 2023 and 2024 and note that 'Despite the influence of avian influenza, the colony has grown by 21.6% since 2022.' Thus, while the Applicants do not seek to dismiss the ongoing risk of HPAI to seabird colonies, this should be countered by consideration of the status of focal populations, rather than being treated as an over-arching risk to all species.'* Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-058: G9 and REP5-058: G10): **G9:** *'The Applicants have scrutinised the PVA inputs, outputs and model code and have realised there has been a misunderstanding of the model guidance literature with respect to how mortality is applied to immature age classes. The 'switch' in the model used to set immature mortality to match adult mortality was turned 'on', as per the guidance, however this setting appears to have been over-ridden during model execution due to the presence of default values of zero in the input tables. This led to models being run without impacts being applied to the immature age classes.* *When this is rectified, the outputs correspond to those in Natural England's comment.* *The PVA have been re-run and the all the relevant sections of the ES, RIAA and associated appendices have been updated. These documents have been submitted at Deadline 6.'* G10: *'The Applicants can confirm that the proposed worst-case lifetime of DBS East and DBS West operating concurrently is 30 years and there is therefore no requirement to rerun the PVA for this aspect. However, the PVA have been re-run (as per the previous comment and response) to amend a separate error (see response to REP5-058: G9 above) and submitted at Deadline 6.'* End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England that further changes are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
G50	We advise that careful consideration should be given to avoiding or restricting cable installation works within 2km of the Greater Wash SPA during	February 27th Submission No change. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 64). Deadline 3	

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	the over-wintering period (1st November to 31st March inclusive) to avoid adverse effects.	Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England welcome the update outlined in the Commitments Register (Revision 2) [REP2-026] that the use of current shipping lanes will be included in the PEMP [REP2-042], however our advice at Deadline 2 still applies. See Appendix L for further information on red-throated diver. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. Natural England welcome the clarification provided by the Applicant in [REP4-088] and are satisfied that an AEoI on Red throated diver in Greater Wash SPA can be ruled out due to the very limited interaction between the cable works area and the Greater Wash SPA and 2km buffer.	See the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP5-037] for the Applicants' full response (ID: R&I ref: G50, RR ref: G64). Deadline 4 See the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP3-028] for the Applicants' full response (REP3-058: A.23). Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	
G51	We acknowledge the right of the Applicants to submit an assessment following their chosen methods, however in such circumstances an assessment should also be provided in line with SNCB advice. We are unable to comment on the assessment conclusions until such an assessment is provided.	February 27th Submission Issue progressed. Natural England acknowledge and welcome the significant efforts that have been made to provide assessment values in line with SNCB advice. However, due to outstanding concerns with respect to in-combination assessments and PVAs, we remain unable to comment on the conclusions presented at this time. Please refer to Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England understand that outstanding ornithology assessment updates will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]). We will provide further comment at Deadline 5.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G 65): '*The Applicants will review the individual comments and update the assessment as appropriate mid-November 2024 in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6]'.* Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G51. RR ref: G65): *'As noted above in response to individual comments, the Applicants will review the submissions and provide updates as appropriate at Deadline 4.* *However, in advance of providing any necessary updates to the in-combination tables and PVAs, the Applicants note that the provision of these will not make a material difference to the assessment, since the results will not materially affect Natural England's conclusions and that, as adverse effect on integrity has already been conceded on guillemot and kittiwake (so change to the in-combination total would not change the assessment conclusions). So these aspects should not be the cause of any delay in Natural England finalising their position on the applications' impacts on ornithological interests.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants have scrutinised the PVA inputs, outputs and model code and have realised there has been a misunderstanding of the model guidance literature with respect to how mortality is applied to	

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		Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. Whilst some outstanding concerns remain with in-combination values and PVAs, the Project alone assessment is now sufficient for Natural England to advise on conclusions and impact values.	immature age classes. The 'switch' in the model used to set immature mortality to match adult mortality was turned 'on', as per the guidance, however this setting appears to have been over-ridden during model execution due to the presence of default values of zero in the input tables. This led to models being run without impacts being applied to the immature age classes. When this is rectified the outputs correspond to those in Natural England's comment. The PVA have been re-run and the all the relevant sections of the ES, RIAA and associated appendices have been updated. These documents are being submitted at Deadline 6. Deadline 7 The Applicants note Natural England's position. End of Examination Position Following submission of **Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology (Revision 4)** [REP6-015], **Appendix 12-13 - Population Viability Analyses (Revision 3)** [REP6-018] and the **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 - Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] at Deadline 6 to address Natural England's comments on this matter, the Applicants consider the matter closed.	
G52	Natural England disagree that it can be concluded that there is no risk of AEoI to ornithology SPA features as a result of impacts on prey species, solely due to impacts being ruled out at EIA scale. Consideration has also only been given to temporary construction impacts on prey in the RIAA, rather than the indirect effects of permanent spawning habitat loss that will also occur. Please see Appendix E for our detailed comments on the indirect effects assessment.	February 27th Submission No change. We note the Applicants have contested the importance of the Dogger Bank sandbank system for prey availability and foraging species. Natural England disagrees with the justification provided and therefore maintains the advice provided in our Relevant Representation on this issue. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 The Applicant has indicated in their response to the Examiner's Questions [REP3-027] that a technical note relating to impacts on prey species will be provided at Deadline 4. Natural England will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No Change. Please see Appendix E5 and M5 for further detail. Deadline 6	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G8): *'The supporting role of benthic habitats for other features is considered within the ornithology assessment (**Environmental Statement Chapter 12 - Offshore Ornithology** [APP- 103] and **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessment Part 4 of 4** [APP-048]). The impacts are assessed within **ES Chapter 9 – Benthic and Intertidal Ecology** [APP-085] and **ES Chapter 10 - Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091] then cross-referenced in the relevant assessments for all phases of the projects (construction, operation and decommissioning). The Applicants consider that the assessment is in line with best practice for offshore wind assessments.* *In addition, **RIAA Appendix B – Sandeel Habitat Potential in the Dogger Bank SAC and Southern North Sea SAC** [APP-050] presents an overview of sandeel habitats across the two SACs (based upon modelling of the potential for habitat to be suitable for sandeel) considering impact footprints of the Projects in the context of the SACs and also the wider Southern North Sea across which ornithological and marine mammal features forage.* *Impacts upon prey are also considered in the Plan Level HRA (RIAA Appendix H – Ornithology Array Assessment Part 2, The Crown Estate, 2022) under the following pressures P1 Habitat Loss/ Gain, P2 Direct Physical Damage and P3 Indirect Physical Damage. In all cases the HRA concludes that:* *"All seabird species screened in forage widely within the marine environment and the predicted area of habitat damaged represents a very small proportion of the foraging habitat available. Any impact is, therefore, considered to be negligible and would not make an appreciable difference to any in-combination impact."*	

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		No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No Change. Natural England consider that for those features where AEoI cannot be ruled out (kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill), this impact pathway will, without resulting in an AEOI in its own right, intensify those effects on those species. Please see our responses to RIES Q46, Q52 and Q53 in Appendix N7 for further detail.	*The Applicants consider there to be good evidence that seabird populations will be very little affected by any impacts on their prey, even during construction which is the period when there is the most risk of effects on prey species (and for which consideration was made in the assessment). For example, the impact of seabirds on their prey stock biomass is very small (estimated across five ecosystems to average about 1% of the primary forage fish being consumed by all seabird species (Saraux et al. 2020)). Furthermore, forage fish stock biomass varies enormously from year to year while seabird population sizes change much more slowly. Thus, two things are apparent from this: fish stock fluctuations are not caused by seabird population fluctuations and seabird populations are little affected by the inter-annual variations in their prey. Population fluctuations are typical of forage fish species because their survival is very low while recruitment varies very widely from year to year. These factors taken together therefore indicate that small changes in prey stock biomass, as assessed in the Fish and Shellfish assessment (**ES Chapter 10 - Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-* *091]), will have undetectable effects on the seabird populations which prey on those stocks, and even if prey stocks are affected more widely than currently assessed, this would still not result in seabird population impacts.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided at Deadline 6 for Point C11 of Table 3-4 and REP5-056: E4.2 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] is reiterated below: *'The Applicants acknowledge the important links between seabirds and feeding grounds with the main prey species being sandeels and clupeids. Seabirds present within the Array Areas are primarily there for foraging, however, as previously stated the Array Areas do not represent the only available foraging grounds for seabirds.* *The updated **Effects on Prey Species Technical Note (Revision 2)** [document reference 14.8] provides mapping showing foraging ranges of the key species (kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill) together with 'hotspot mapping for these species based on Cleasby et al. (2019) and further information on kittiwake from Wischnewski et al. (2017). In addition, the Applicants have also included mapping showing the updated heat mapping for both herring and sandeel (in line with the Kyle-Henney et al. (2024) methodology).* *The mapping presented in this report clearly shows that sandeel spawning are widespread across the Southern North Sea outwith the boundaries of the Dogger Bank SAC. In terms of herring, the Dogger Bank SAC is not particularly important for spawning with this mostly occurring more inshore and along the coast and south towards the Thames.* *Following discussions with Natural England on 7th May the Applicants have presented mapping in this updated report showing the foraging ranges of the key species of concern (i.e. kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill), the hotspot mapping from Cleaby et al. (2020) and the above-mentioned mapping of potential spawning areas. Together these demonstrate the point made previously that whilst seabirds are foraging*	

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			in the Array Areas, prey resource is widespread throughout their foraging range and hotspot modelling suggests that locations outwith the Array Areas are of greater importance for these species. *The Applicants note that Natural England consider that assessment undertaken is simplistic however we point out that:* • *Where birds are subject to displacement effects (such as razorbill, guillemot and gannet), the mortality from this is assumed to result from a reduction in access to prey. So, in this case, consideration of any indirect effects via effects on prey is double counting to some degree (e.g. the birds are already displaced from the Array Areas so effects on prey within these locations have no additional effect).For birds not displaced, such as kittiwake and the residual auks (under Natural England's preferred displacement rate 70% are displaced so only 30% remain), the area which can no longer be used for foraging is confined to the immediate footprint of the infrastructure within the Array Areas (and within the Export Cable Corridor small sections of cable protection) which is permanently lost. In addition to this there are direct effects on the prey themselves (disturbance, noise impacts etc) which is what has been assessed in **Chapter 10 Fish and Shellfish Ecology** [APP-091]) and cross referenced within the ornithology assessment (**Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology (Revision 4)** [document reference: 7.12] and **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 (Revision 5)** [document reference: 6.1]). Therefore, the assessment has covered all the potential pathways for impacts. These were assessed in line with standard practice in the Application, with the steps set out in this document. The Applicants note that Natural England's comment does not include any further request to amend the assessment or advice on additional information required. No updates are therefore proposed to be made to the assessments.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position outlined at Deadline 6.	
G53	Presentation of displacement matrices including upper and lower confidence intervals Whilst the Applicants have updated their displacement assessment for the arrays combined the relevant tables in ES Appendix 12-12 [APP-115] have not been updated. Natural England advise that ES Appendix 12-12 [APP-115] is updated to reflect the updated displacement assessment figures and that all displacement matrices are presented (for both EIA and the RIAA), including for the upper and lower confidence intervals. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	February 27th Submission New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No change. Natural England acknowledge the difficulties associated with summing confidence intervals. However, we maintain our previous advice that the Applicant's original method is inappropriate for calculating seasonal peak abundances and thus displacement impacts for the arrays combined (see R&I G6 and G11), which we consider leads to under-representation of impacts on displacement-affected species. We maintain our advice that displacement matrices are provided including upper and lower	Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that the '*the confidence interval estimates have not been updated as it is not appropriate for these to be summed. Hence the original values, obtained as the confidence intervals of the summed bootstrap samples (i.e. rather than sum of the individual confidence estimates) remain appropriate for this purpose*'. (See Table 2-13). Deadline 5 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: G53): '*The Applicants consider they have set out their position on these and other matters and where they remain in disagreement with Natural England's position (e.g. REP3-028, REP3-030). Please note that the Applicants have presented the assessment in line with Natural England's advice (including the use of*	

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		confidence intervals. Please see Appendix G4 for further detail. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. Whilst displacement matrices including confidence intervals have not been submitted, the upper confidence level impact figures for auks have been provided for use in calculation of compensation quanta.	*seasonal peak mean abundances), and the above disagreement notwithstanding, the Applicants do not consider there to be any further merit in pursuing these discussions.* *However the Applicants consider that the following Natural England comment with respect to density and abundance estimates:* *This is a source of uncertainty and potential under-precaution in the assessment – densities may, at any one time, exceed those recorded by baseline surveys.* *fails to acknowledge the opposite is equally true: i.e. that recorded densities, and abundance may in fact be peak values and therefore actual numbers on the sites may often in fact be much lower. This is why central values (e.g.mean or median) are more appropriate for use in assessments. If the Applicants consistently advocated for use of the lower 95% confidence intervals as the basis for assessment this would (rightly) be criticised by Natural England on the basis that this would potentially underrepresent impacts. However, when the Applicants make the point that* *Natural England's use of the upper 95% confidence intervals is over-precautionary and risks over-estimating impacts this is defended as being appropriate in the face of uncertainty. The Applicants maintain that a balanced approach to uncertainty is more appropriate and statistically robust, based around the use of central values and consideration of confidence limits only in the final outputs, rather than at multiple intermediate steps in the process.* *The Applicants fully agree that there is uncertainty in the baseline density and abundance estimates and this is explicitly presented throughout the assessment (in the ES chapter, in the RIAA, in the technical appendices) so it is unclear how Natural England is able to state:* *We note that the uncertainty inherent in the estimation of baseline density and abundance estimates has not been addressed by the Applicant in this document and that this is an important omission when it comes to calculating compensation requirements.* *The difference between Natural England's approach to uncertainty and the Applicants' is that the Applicants take a balanced view that 'real' baseline figures may lie anywhere between the lower and upper 95% confidence intervals, and as such the mean is the most appropriate representative value, while Natural England only consider the upper half of the range, from the mean to the upper 95% confidence value.'* Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter. End of Examination Position Following Natural England's confirmation at Deadline 5 that this issue had been satisfactorily resolved, the Applicants consider this matter is closed.	
G54	Cumulative and in-combination totals	Deadline 3	Deadline 3	

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	Cumulative impact totals presented in 7.12 ES Chapter 12 [AS-058] and the unapportioned in-combination totals presented in 6.1 **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 3)** [AS-086] do not always match. We advise the Applicants to check the cumulative and in-combination totals for all species. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England acknowledge the Applicant's response [REP3-028], however, we consider that there is no scientific justification for applying different methods to calculating cumulative and in-combination totals. We therefore advise that the same methods be applied to both sets of calculations, noting that it would be appropriate for the Applicant to present totals for both methods for both cumulative and in-combination totals. Deadline 5 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No Change. The Applicant presented Natural England with their reasoning for the remaining discrepancies in a meeting on 9th June 2025. We understand the Applicant intends to formally submit this clarification at Deadline 6. Without prejudice to our formal review, we consider this has the potential to satisfactorily resolve this issue. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue resolved. This has been addressed in the Applicant's updated RIAA [REP6-009].	The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that 'the collision estimates in these tables reflect different collision avoidance rates that have been applied in the past. The title for table 12-99 of **Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology** (Revision 2) [AS-058] states that the collisions are presented using the older avoidance rate of 98.9% unless otherwise indicated (see the table footnotes) and in the text that follows the table (paragraphs 809 and 810) it is explained how the total value changes with the application of the more recently advised higher avoidance rate. In Table 9-23 of 6.1 **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 3)** [AS-086] the collisions have been adjusted using the updated avoidance rate of 99.2%. It is acknowledged that this aspect (presentation of collision for older wind farms which used different avoidance rates) is one which can result in confusion such as here, however the figures indicated by Natural England are all correct and the associated text explains this'. Deadline 5 The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: G54). End of Examination Position The Applicants consider that this matter has been closed following submission of the updated **RIAA HRA Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 5)** [REP6-008] at Deadline 6.	
G55	Great black-backed gull and lesser black-backed gull cumulative totals The cumulative collision totals presented for great black-backed gull and lesser black-backed gull are lower than the cumulative totals presented at SEP & DEP, despite additional impacts from several projects since the SEP&DEP examination, including those of Dogger Bank South. Natural England advise that the Applicants check the cumulative	Deadline 3 New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcomes that the Applicant's review of the cumulative collision totals for these species will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5.	Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that they '*will review the cumulative collision totals for these species and provide updates at Deadline 4, if appropriate. However, in advance of this review the Applicants note that cumulative and in-combination tables often vary between applications due to differences in presentation of factors such as avoidance rates, and these are often explained in the accompanying text. Furthermore, the Applicants are of the opinion that revising these tables will have no material effects on the assessment conclusions and note Natural England has made no suggestion to the contrary. So these aspects should not be the cause of any delay in Natural England finalising their position on the applications' impacts on ornithological interests'.* (See Table 2-13).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	collision impacts for these species. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	Deadline 5 No Change. We acknowledge that the Applicants have provided updated assessments, however the totals remain lower than expected. Please see Appendix G5 for further details. Deadline 6 No Change. The Applicant presented Natural England with their reasoning for the remaining discrepancies in a meeting on 9th June 2025. We understand the Applicant intends to formally submit this clarification at Deadline 6. Without prejudice to our formal review, we consider this has the potential to satisfactorily resolve this issue. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. We have reviewed the additional clarifications provided by the Applicant in REP6-052 on remaining discrepancies in in-combination totals between projects, and agree that they are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions. See our Deadline 7 cover letter for further detail.	Deadline 6 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-058: G8): '*The Applicants have thoroughly reviewed their cumulative tables and are confident these are accurate for the wind farms presented and following the latest SNCB guidance.* ***Great black-backed gull*** *Natural England state there is a discrepancy between the total they expect (1420, as presented by Outer Dowsing) and the Applicants' total of 1227. This difference is 193. This is accounted for as follows.* *For the Greater Gabbard wind farm an annual collision estimate of 27 was presented at an avoidance rate of 99.82% (Banks et al. 2006)). Adjusting this to the current avoidance rate of 99.4% gives a figure of 90 (as presented by the Applicants in Table 12-109 of **Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology (Revision 3)** [REP4-032]). Unfortunately, Outer Dowsing reproduced a figure of 250 which had been erroneously calculated by DEP and SEP. This error appears to have occurred because DEP and SEP applied an avoidance rate correction (from 99.82% to 99.5%) to collision figures which had already been corrected (i.e. the original collisions were corrected twice). This accounts for 160 of the 193 apparent discrepancy identified by Natural England.* *For the Inch Cape wind farm there appears to be an error in the annual total column of the Outer Dowsing submission (Table 12.81 of REP4a-011 of the Outer Dowsing submissions)). This states that there zero collisions in the breeding season, 44.2 in the nonbreeding season and 219.2 in total. The Applicants have double-checked the original Inch Cape submission and can confirm that the annual total using the current avoidance rate should be the same as the nonbreeding season one (44.2). This difference (175) is clearly more than that remaining between the Applicants total and the one Natural England expected (1420). However the sum of the Outer Dowsing annual total is actually 1595, not 1420 as reported. Correcting for the Greater Gabbard and Inch Cape errors, the Outer Dowsing total is 1260, 33 more than that in the Applicants' table. This is accounted for by Outer Dowsing including several additional Scottish wind farms which have been recently submitted (but not consented).* *Given that it is clear there is considerable scope for mistakes in transcribing and updating cumulative impacts, as illustrated by this detailed investigation undertaken by the Applicants, it is the Applicants' strong recommendation that Natural England should review and collate wind farm impacts for all UK projects and maintain this as new projects are added, in order that this can be made available to future applicants and avoid this situation in future.* ***Guillemot*** *Outer Dowsing's guillemot total annual abundance (Table 12.61 of REP4a-011 of the Outer Dowsing submissions) was 741,587. This is 108,618 more than the Applicants' equivalent (632,969, REP4-032 Table 12-92). This difference is accounted for by six additional Scottish wind farms (137,022 in total) minus 28,404 for wind farms which Outer Dowsing report as being lower (for the Projects: 35,604 instead of 6,0438; Five Estuaries 4,813 instead of 4,899 and for Outer Dowsing 24,709 instead of 27,653).*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			As for great black-backed gull the Applicants consider these differences to reflect the inevitable situation which arises with an ever increasing list of wind farms, regularly revised guidance on approaches and the increasing risk of errors being made. As above, the Applicants consider the solution to this situation is for Natural England to be custodians of the cumulative list of wind farm impacts and to supply this list to applicants. ***Razorbill*** *Outer Dowsing's razorbill total annual abundance (Table 12.67 of REP4a-011 of the Outer Dowsing submissions) was 217,162. This is 2,044 more than the Applicants' equivalent (215,118, REP4-032 Table 12-96). This difference is accounted for by six additional Scottish wind farms (10,768 in total) minus 8,805 for wind farms which Outer Dowsing report as being lower (for the Projects: 21,303 instead of 28,886 and for Outer Dowsing 12,257 instead of 13,479) plus 81 for Forthwind which Outer Dowsing mistakenly added twice (i.e. an annual total of 277 instead of 196).* *As for guillemot and great black-backed gull the Applicants consider these differences to reflect the inevitable situation which arises with an ever increasing list of wind farms, regularly revised guidance on approaches and the increasing risk of errors being made. As above, the Applicants consider the solution to this situation is for Natural England to be custodians of the cumulative list of wind farm impacts and to supply this list to applicants.* *Overall these differences will make no material difference to the assessments and the conclusions of the PVA will be little affected, therefore the Applicants do not consider there to be any useful purpose served by continuing to update these totals and rerun the PVA each time one of the 50 wind farms in the list releases an update.'* End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England that further changes are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
G56	Lack of PVAs for cumulative impact assessments The Applicants have not provided PVAs for cumulative EIA impacts, despite several of these amounting to increases in background mortality rates of over 1%, when assessed according to Natural England's advice. Natural England advises that the Applicants run PVAs to assess projected impacts on populations wherever cumulative impacts lead to increases in background mortality rate of greater than 1% when calculated according to Natural England's advice. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	Deadline 3 New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that additional PVAs will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. PVAs have been provided for all necessary species.	Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G56). Deadline 4 The Applicants submitted updated PVAs [REP4-034] at Deadline 4. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
G57	Presentation of PVA inputs and outputs Natural England advise that the updated inputs and outputs for all PVA scenarios undertaken for the assessment are clearly presented in Appendix 7.12.12.13 to reflect the updated impact values in the assessment and the PVA scenarios and results presented in the RIAA. This should include presenting the log files for all PVA scenarios undertaken, in order to enable assessment of the specification and paramaterisation of the models. This applies to PVAs presented for both the projects alone and in-combination with other projects. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	Deadline 3 New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England acknowledge that the PVA updates provided in Annex A of [AS-085] were missed in our Deadline 2 review. We will provide further comment at Deadline 5 following the Applicant's submission of the remaining PVA updates at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]). Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Whilst updated PVAs have been provided some results are still not as we would expect, and so we advise the Applicant to verify the results of all PVA scenarios run for the assessment. Deadline 6 The Applicant has confirmed to Natural England that an error has been identified in the PVAs, and that updated outputs will be submitted at Deadline 6 (meeting held 9th June 2025). Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicant has provided corrected PVA outputs in [REP6-019].	Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (R&I ref: G56). Deadline 4 The Applicants submitted updated PVAs [REP4-034] at Deadline 4. Deadline 6 See response provided at Deadline 6 to Point G49 in this table.	
G58	In-combination totals for kittiwake at FFC SPA In-combination totals for impacts on kittiwake at FFC SPA appear to be lower than we would expect, given the totals presented during the SEP&DEP Examination. Natural England advise that the Applicants check in-combination figures for kittiwake at FFC SPA and correct these if necessary. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	Deadline 3 New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review and assessment updates will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5	Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that they '*will review the kittiwake in-combination table and update this if necessary at Deadline 4.* *However, in advance of this review the Applicants note that in-combination tables often vary between applications due to differences in presentation of factors such as avoidance rates, and these are often explained in the accompanying text. Furthermore, the Applicants are of the opinion that revising these tables will have no material effects on the assessment conclusions and note Natural England has made no suggestion to the contrary. Furthermore, the Applicants note that as AEoI has been conceded on this feature, any increase the in-combination total would not change the assessment conclusions*'. (See Table 2-13).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No change. Whilst we acknowledge the Applicant's comments that these discrepancies are not likely to affect the assessment conclusions or compensation quantum (REP3-028), they lead to significantly lower in-combination impacts than we would expect, and it is important that the assessment is as accurate as possible as it may be used as a reference for future projects. Deadline 6 No Change. The Applicant presented Natural England with their reasoning for the remaining discrepancies in a meeting on 9th June 2025. We understand the Applicant intends to formally submit this clarification at Deadline 6. Without prejudice to our formal review, we consider this has the potential to satisfactorily resolve this issue. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. We have reviewed the additional clarifications provided by the Applicant in REP6-052 on remaining discrepancies in in-combination totals between projects, and agree that they are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions. See our Deadline 7 cover letter for further detail.	Deadline 6 See response provided to REP5-058: G5 at Deadline 6 in Point G41 of this table. End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England that further changes are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
G59	In-combination totals for guillemot and razorbill at FFC SPA Natural England advise the Applicants to refer to the advice provided to DEP & SEP on the appropriate displacement and mortality rates to be used for the impacts of Hornsea 4 on guillemot and razorbill at FFC SPA, and update their in-combination totals accordingly. Natural England recommend that the impacts of these updated figures are then assessed by PVA. Please see Appendix G2, Table 2 for further detail.	Deadline 3 New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's review and assessment updates will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No change. Whilst we acknowledge the Applicant's comments that these discrepancies are not likely to affect the assessment conclusions or compensation	Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that '*will review the previous assessments as advised by Natural England and provide updated in-combination tables and PVA at Deadline 4 as appropriate.* *However, in advance of this review the Applicants note that in-combination tables often vary between applications due to presentational differences, and these are typically explained in the accompanying text. Furthermore, the Applicants are of the opinion that revising these tables will have no material effects on the assessment conclusions and note Natural England has made no suggestion to the contrary. So these aspects should not be the cause of any delay in Natural England finalising their position on the applications' impacts on ornithological interests*'. (See Table 2-13). Deadline 6 See response provided to REP5-058: G6 at Deadline 6 in Point G41 of this table.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		quantum (REP3-028), they lead to significantly lower in-combination impacts than we would expect, and it is important that the assessment is as accurate as possible as it may be used as a reference for future projects. Deadline 6 No Change. The Applicant presented Natural England with their reasoning for the remaining discrepancies in a meeting on 9th June 2025. We understand the Applicant intends to formally submit this clarification at Deadline 6. Without prejudice to our formal review, we consider this has the potential to satisfactorily resolve this issue. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. We have reviewed the additional clarifications provided by the Applicant in REP6-052 on remaining discrepancies in in-combination totals between projects, and agree that they are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions. See our Deadline 7 cover letter for further detail. For some species (including FFC SPA razorbill), we note that totals for DBS appear lower that those for ODOW due to the inclusion of Scottish projects in the ODOW assessment. We advise that projects should be screened in/out of assessments based on the BDMPS regional definitions rather than which jurisdiction the project falls in. We would therefore expect Scottish project to have also been included in the DBS assessment. However, we acknowledge that in this instance it would not have a material impact on the assessment conclusions.	End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England that further changes are unlikely to have a material impact on assessment conclusions, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
G60	PVA results The results of several of the PVAs undertaken by the Applicants are not as we would expect. Natural England advise that the Applicants check the results of all PVA scenarios run for the assessment, and ensure that the inputs and outputs of all	Deadline 3 New issue - No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4	Deadline 3 The Applicants have responded to this point in **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] R&I ref: G60). Deadline 4 The Applicants submitted updated PVAs [REP4-034] at Deadline 4.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix G - Offshore Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	scenarios are clearly presented, along with log files. Please see Appendix G2. Table 2 and G57 for further detail.	Natural England welcome the clarification provided by the Applicant on the differences between the DEP&SEP and DBS assessments, and acknowledge that the PVA updates provided in Annex A of [AS-085] were missed in our Deadline 2 review. We will provide further comment at Deadline 5 following the Applicant's submission of the remaining PVA updates at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]). Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Whilst updated PVAs have been provided some results are still not as we would expect, and so we advise the Applicant to verify the results of all PVA scenarios run for the assessment. Deadline 6 The Applicant has confirmed to Natural England that an error has been identified in the PVAs, and that updated outputs will be submitted at Deadline 6 (meeting held 9th June 2025). Deadline 7 && End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The Applicant has provided corrected PVA outputs in [REP6-019].	Deadline 6 See response provided to REP5-058: G9 and G10 at Deadline 6 in Point G46 of this table. End of Examination Position Amended PVA outputs were provided in Appendix 12-13 - Population Viability Analyses (Revision 3) [REP6-019], matter is considered closed.	

3.9 Offshore Ornithology Compensation

Table 3-9 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Offshore Ornithology Compensation

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
Kittiwake Compensation Document used: 6.2.1 Appendix 1 – Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan				
H1	Natural England recognises the current uncertainty around the implementation of the Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan (KSCP)	End of Examination Position Natural England recognises the current uncertainty around the implementation of the Kittiwake Strategic	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H1):	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	and welcomes the provision of project-led kittiwake compensation measures, the alignment of these with the measures and approach outlined in the KSCP, and the commitment to securing these measures as a requirement of the DCO.	Compensation Plan (KSCP) and welcomes the provision of project-led kittiwake compensation measures, the alignment of these with the measures and approach outlined in the KSCP, and the commitment to securing these measures as a requirement of the DCO.	*'The Applicants recognise the importance of developing and securing options for project-led measures considering uncertainty surrounding the delivery of strategic measures.'*	
H2	The Applicants have omitted the section of the KSCP which states: '11.1.2 The construction of two offshore SANS was preferred by the Steering Group to provide mitigation of risk of failure at one offshore SANS. Within this there was an ecological preference that these were in different locations, however it was agreed by the Steering Group that when considering the balance of economics that the two structures near to each other was perfectly acceptable'. Further, we also highlight that only the first two options listed by the Applicants were supported by the SNCBs (Natural England and JNCC) in the Kittiwake Steering Group. This should be considered by the Applicants in the development of their project-led compensation proposals.	<u>February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position</u> Issue Resolved. The text has been updated in Revision 2 of the Kittiwake Compensation Plan (KCP) [PDB-003].	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: G H2).	
H3	Natural England do not agree with the predicted impact values and compensation levels presented. We advise that the KCP is updated following any reassessments undertaken in response to the advice provided in Appendix G. Compensation metrics should be presented in line with both the Applicants preferred method and SNCB guidance.	<u>February 27th Submission</u> Issue progressed. Natural England acknowledge and welcome the significant efforts that have been made to provide assessment values in line with SNCB advice. However, due to outstanding concerns with respect to in-combination assessments and PVAs, we remain unable to comment on the conclusions and impact values presented at this time. Please see Appendix G2 for further detail. <u>Deadline 3</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H3): '*The Applicants cannot determine the exact impact at present, this will be confirmed through DCO examination (and partly determined by the outcome of other projects going though examination regarding in combination effects). While our ornithological assessment as submitted and referred to in the **Kittiwake Compensation Plan** [APP-052] was fit for purpose and followed the appropriate guidance at the point of submission the reassessment was undertaken at Natural England's request, updating the numbers in line with new guidance (to be provided in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6]), the Applicants do not expect the numbers for kittiwake to change in a substantive way that would affect the broad scale of compensation proposed*'. <u>Deadline 2 & 4</u> **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP2-010] was updated.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 4 Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated KCP and outstanding aspects of the ornithology assessment will be submitted at Deadline 4, and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Natural England are now in agreement with the Project alone assessment and welcome the Applicant's presentation of compensation requirements according to the 'Hornsea 3 part 2' method. However, Natural England advise that the Applicant check the results of their calculations as the figures are not as expected. Please see Appendix H5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue satisfactorily resolved. The Applicant has provided an explanation for the difference in compensation requirements when calculated by the Applicant versus Natural England according to the H3Pt2 method [REP6-052]. Natural England maintain that it is more appropriate for a natal dispersal rate of 0.77 to be used, however the justification given for the Applicant's approach is reasonable.	Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses provided regarding compensation calculations in Table 2-22 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. Deadline 7 The Applicants note an updated version of **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-010] was issued at Deadline 6 of Examination and await Natural England's feedback at the next Deadline. End of Examination Position Following agreement with Natural England that this issue has been satisfactorily resolved, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
H4	Until such time as evidence is provided to support appropriate apportioning rates of kittiwake to offshore colonies for the Dogger Bank South projects, we continue to advise that the colony apportioning method followed in the impact assessment is appropriately precautionary.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position The Applicants have confirmed that apportioning rates have not been reduced on the basis of offshore colonies, however offshore colonies are still suggested to be an inherent source of precaution in the apportioning of 100% of adult birds to FFC SPA in the KCP. We note that Dogger Bank South is not in as prominent an area for oil and gas infrastructure compared to other projects, and therefore presence of birds from offshore colonies cannot be assumed.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H4): '*The Applicants did not use data obtained by ODOW regarding the presence of kittiwake to reduce the Projects' apportionment of kittiwake to Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA. Reference to work undertaken by ODOW in the **Kittiwake Compensation Plan** [APP-052] was used only to support the viability of offshore ANS as a measure by evidencing the presence of breeding kittiwake colonies on oil and gas structures in the North Sea, and to identify additional recruitment pools.*'	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
H5	The impacts currently predicted for the Projects alone make DBS the highest impacting project on FFC SPA kittiwake to date, and would likely result in an adverse effect on site integrity (AEoI) alone. Further consideration needs to be given to reducing the Projects' impacts, prior to the need for compensation. This could include reducing the overall array size, removing hotspots, concentrating turbines in cold spots, and/or raising the hub height to 40m above HAT.	February 27th Submission No change. Natural England continue to advise that further consideration is given to potential mitigation measures to reduce impacts on seabird features. Please see Appendix G2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change. The Applicant maintains their position that no additional mitigation is required. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Deadline 5 No Change. The Applicant maintains their position that no additional mitigation is required. Natural England maintain our previous advice and have provided further advice in response to ISH Action 7 in Appendix M5 of our Deadline 5 submission. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position No change. The Applicant's Responses to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] confirms that they will not present hotspot modelling as 'any further reductions in the developable area within the lease boundaries would risk making the Projects economically unviable.' Whilst we note this argument, it is not within our field of expertise to comment on. The Applicant also maintains their disagreement with Natural England's previous advice that the Projects are within foraging range of breeding birds at FFC SPA. Natural England maintain our previous advice at Deadline 5 [REP5-060] relating to mitigation. We therefore consider that agreement will not be reached on this matter within Examination.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H5): '*The Applicants maintain that the Hornsea Project 3 calculation method represents a precautionary estimate and concedes adverse effect on site integrity (AEoI) for in-combination collision mortality only.* *Predicted kittiwake impacts and scale of compensation are unaffected by Natural England's comments on the ornithology assessment therefore there is no requirement to update the* ***Kittiwake Compensation Plan*** *[APP-052] as submitted for these aspects. '* Deadline 6 The Applicants refer Natural England to Table 2-24 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] regarding responses on ornithology mitigation. End of Examination Position The Applicants highlight **Appendix A - Offshore Ornithology Year 1 and 2 Combined Spatial Plots** [REP7-137] document submitted at Deadline 7, which provides examples of the site-specific aerial survey data that was collated and examined (pre-application) to indicate what (if any) areas within The Crown Estate lease options showed higher and lower densities of birds. The Applicants consider that the detail presented in **Appendix A - Offshore Ornithology Year 1 and 2 Combined Spatial Plots** [REP7-137] sufficiently demonstrates that all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid potential areas of high abundance for ornithological receptors, and that additional survey work would not provide any material evidence for which to inform any further refinement of the Projects Array Areas. Regarding the potential commitment to other mitigation measures, the Applicants maintain the position as outlined in Table 2-20 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of **Appendix A - Offshore Ornithology Year 1 and 2 Combined Spatial Plots** [REP7-137] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
H6	The Hornsea 3 ('New Colony approach') approach should be used to determine the appropriate scale of compensation required for ANS, as recommended in the KSCP. Further discussion will also be needed on the appropriate compensation ratio and/or means of addressing uncertainty in the level of compensation provided.	<u>February 27th Submission</u> Natural England provided further guidance on this matter in Appendix H1 of our Deadline 1 submission [REP1-065]. We welcome that the Applicants have provided values for breeding pairs needed according to both the Hornsea 3 and 4 approaches, however only the Hornsea 4 values have been carried forward to the calculations with ratios applied. We advise that both approaches are carried through for all scale and provision assessments. Please see Appendix H2 for further detail. <u>Deadline 3</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 4</u> No Change - Please refer to our updated comments on the Hornsea 3 Part 2 approach in Appendix G4. <u>Deadline 5</u> Issue Progressed. We welcome the Applicant's presentation of compensation requirements according to the 'Hornsea 3 part 2' method, and that compensation requirements have been presented for a range of compensation ratios. However, we remain unable to advise on an appropriate specific compensation ratio at this time. Please see Appendix H5 for further detail. <u>Deadline 6</u> No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Please see Appendix H6 for further detail. <u>Deadline 7</u> No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H6): *'The Applicants note Natural England's position but considers the Hornsea 3 method to contain methodological flaws which severely limit its suitability. These include the use of 'age at recruitment' as a measure of the distribution of ages within the breeding population. For example, the method assumes that because 26% of 3-year-old birds begin breeding at that age this means that 26% of all breeding birds are this age, which is incorrect since it fails to account for the high survival rate of breeding age birds. Thus, in the Hornsea 3 method younger age classes make a disproportionate contribution to overall productivity. This is compounded by the capping of productivity at the age of 10. While this is a realistic upper limit on the age at which birds first breed, it fails to allow for the fact that many birds will continue to breed for several years after this age and likely make up a significant proportion of the breeding age class.'* <u>Deadline 3</u> The Applicants have responded to this point in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (H2-3.2): *'The Applicants welcome the acknowledgement of complexities surrounding compensation quantum calculation, and the proposed review to be undertaken by the BTO. Upon receipt of the final report, the Applicants will review the BTO conclusions, and the recommendations made by Natural England. The Applicants will provide details on its understanding of the BTO work package and any implications to the Projects compensation requirements at the appropriate point during examination.'* <u>Deadline 4</u> See responses provided in Table 2-14 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088], however the conclusion is provided in REP2-055:1.10: *'The Applicants acknowledge that there are valid ecological origins behind the four-breeding season period. However, as evidenced in **Case for Reduction in Kittiwake Breeding Seasons for ANS Installation (Revision 2)** [application reference 12.6] the four breeding seasons compared to two over the course the Projects lifespan (and beyond) is insignificant and does not materially impact the ability of the ANS to deliver the Projects compensation requirement. Rather, it delays delivery of compensation by two years.* *To deliver the offshore ANS four years in advance of first possible operation (planned for 2029), the Applicants would have been required to install the structure in Q1 2025, prior to consent being granted. This was not considered feasible, or reasonable in regard to financial or logistical risks. Updated details on the Projects programme are provided in **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)** [application reference 6.2.1]. In summary, delivering an offshore ANS is a challenging task, and one that resulted in Hornsea 4 abandoning their offshore ANS scheme in pursuit of an onshore one – it is evident that the delivery of this measure can be a genuine risk to overall project delivery. As such, the Applicants assert that it is crucial to ensure that they hold all of the necessary ground condition data from site investigation surveys, have adopted thorough processes with site selection, and are proceeding*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			with diligence during the concept and detailed design processes, contractor procurement and fabrication phases for the ANS.' Deadline 6 and End of Examination Position The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H10): 'The *Applicants acknowledge that a ratio of 1:1 is unlikely to be appropriate and have reviewed Natural England's responses to ExAQ1, and comments made in Appendix G4 of their DL4 submission on the application of compensation ratios [REP4-124]. Natural England's position as outlined in [REP4-124] is that they "recognise that using the 95% UCI impact value can, in combination with use of greater ratios, result in large compensation quanta for some species, and that therefore a pragmatic interpretation of these calculations may be needed. For example, where a compensation case for a project with a substantial quantum is well detailed and has good prospects of success, a case could be made that where the Hornsea 3 approach is adopted, it is unnecessary to then adopt both the 95% UCL impact value and a ratio higher than 2:1 to adequately account for uncertainty."* *Following the completion of geophysical surveys, ongoing stakeholder engagement, selection of an ANS location, imminent submission of a marine licence application, seabed lease application progression, a defined position on quantum and an updated **Outline Kittiwake Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)** [REP4-022] submitted during examination the Applicants consider their compensation case to be both advanced and comprehensive. The progressed nature of the Applicants kittiwake compensation package was confirmed by Natural England during a meeting between both parties on 28th May 2025. As such, the Applicants consider a 2:1 ratio to be suitably cautious whichever calculation method is applied to determine compensation quantum.*'	
H7	The Applicants have incorrectly stated the upper estimate of nest provision required for DBS East, DBS West and ODOW as 5,000 nesting spaces. We advise that the 'compensation envelope' was 5,500 in the published KSCP. We also highlight that this was based on lower impact predictions than have now been submitted.	February 27th Submission Issue resolved. Revision 2 of the KCP [PDB-003] has been updated in line with the value published in the KSCP. However, as noted in Revision 3 of the KCP and Appendix H2, given the higher impacts now predicted from the Dogger Bank South projects, at this stage it cannot be assumed that a 'compensation envelope' of 5,500 will be sufficient. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated KCP will be	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H7): *'This error has been corrected and an amendment is provided in the updated **Kittiwake Compensation Plan** [APP-052]. This update will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005].'* Deadline 2 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP2-010] was updated. Deadline 4 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)** [REP4-020] was updated. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H11):	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		submitted at Deadline 4 and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Natural England acknowledge the changes made to references to the KSCP compensation envelope; however we reiterate our comments regarding the envelope being based on lower impact figures than the submitted ESs have revealed. Please see our comments in Appendix H5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Progressed. Natural England welcome the updated compensation figures for Round 4, calculated according to Natural England's advice using the Hornsea Three approach, which are presented in updates to the Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6) [REP6-010]. The Applicant should bear in mind that the compensation envelope also needs to accommodate the impacts the other Dogger Bank projects, and did not specifically take into account a reduced lead-in time to 2 years as proposed by both the Applicant and ODOW.	*'Updated compensation figures for Round 4 calculated according to Natural England's advice are presented in updates to the **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-010] to be submitted at Deadline 6.'*	
H8	Compensation totals should be provided in line with SNCB guidance alongside the Applicants preferred approach.	February 27th Submission No change. See H6. We also advise that the ODOW values are updated to reflect revisions to their assessment. As the ODOW Examination is due to end on 4th April, we consider there is sufficient time for this to be included within the DBS Examination. Please see Appendix H2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H8): *'The project specific advice referred to by the Applicants concerns consultation with Natural England during an ETG meeting (25th April 2024) during which it was stated that "…in terms of ratios they [Natural England] tend to look at ratios in a wider way and form part of an overall strategy – the presence of at least two structures may lower risk and thus ratios, but additional factors such as the locations of the ANS and distance from one another should be taken into account once those details are finalised. In terms of what Natural England have seen, 2:1 or 3:1 would be appropriate for DBS."* *It is acknowledged that Natural England also stated that a ratio of 3:1 may be appropriate. However, the methods for kittiwake compensation calculation employed by the Applicants align more closely to that of Hornsea 4 which proposed a compensation ratio of a minimum of 2:1 which is considered to be appropriate. Furthermore, the Applicants maintain that a considerable amount of risk will be offset by*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No Change - Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated KCP will be submitted at Deadline 4 and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Please also see our updated comments on the application of compensation ratios in Appendix G4. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England disagree with the figures included for ODOW's compensation requirements. Please see Appendix H5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Largely Resolved. Compensation totals have been included in the KCP [REP6-010] for DBS and ODOW according to NE's advised approach for ratios of 1:1 and 2:1. As the requirements for other ratios can be inferred from this, we consider this issue effectively resolved.	*the implementation of multiple ANS, as well as a carefully considered and thorough site selection process. Therefore, the compensation ratio of 2:1 is deemed to be suitable.* Deadline 3 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (H2-3.2 (cont.): *'A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Applicants and ODOW is has been agreed and signed by both parties. The Project-Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan will be updated at Deadline 4 to reflect this. However, should the ODOW Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) installation be delayed, or not proceed, the Applicants maintain that their project led structure will provide sufficient nesting spaces to accommodate the Projects compensation requirement. As set out in **Round 4 Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-053], the delivery of a second ANS for the Round 4 projects provides additional security from the perspective of compensation provision on a strategic basis, though is not required for the delivery of sufficient nesting spaces. Should ODOW not proceed for any reason, the cumulative Round 4 compensation requirement for would be reduced by an equivalent amount such that a second ANS would not be necessary. The Applicant would also like to highlight the presence of the Projects onshore ANS at Gateshead which provides additional resilience through early compensation delivery.* *Under the 'worst case' impact scenario calculated by the Applicants (the Hornsea 3 calculation method, UCI 95% and 100% apportionment to adult population) the Projects compensation requirement is 2,085 birds, this is reduced to 1,007 when the Hornsea 4 calculation is applied. This figure is presented within the **Precaution in the Ornithology Assessment and Implications for Compensation Quantum** [document reference 13.6] report and accompanying spreadsheet (submitted at Deadline 3) and represents a ratio of 1:1. At a ratio of 2:1, the Projects alone requirement for compensation would increase to 4,170 (2,014 using Hornsea 4 calculation) which remains within the 'compensation envelope' outlined in Round 4 Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan [APP-053]. The Applicant would consider the Hornsea 3 is value to be excessively precautionary and does not regard the use of a ratio exceeding 1:1 when applied in combination with the Hornsea 3 calculation method alongside a 95% UCI, 100% adult apportionment to be appropriate. However, to provide further comfort, the ANS design being progressed by the Applicants by their appointed contractor is modular until the point of fabrication, which ensures flexibility for the structure capacity for nesting spaces, regardless of the final quantum figure that is agreed by the Secretary of State. This eliminates any risk of the project-led ANS not providing sufficient quantum. In addition and as noted in H2 –3.2, Natural England acknowledge that identifying a robust and proportionate approach to quantifying the compensation requirements for offshore windfarms impacting seabird SPAs has proved challenging. Multiple methods have been used but there is no clear consensus on the most appropriate method to use and as such, a case-by-case approach is required to determining compensation quantum.* *The Applicant is maintaining a watching brief on the ODOW kittiwake compensation numbers through their documents submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The Applicant will update the Round 4 compensation requirement figures accordingly via updates to the Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan at Deadline 4.'*	

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			Deadline 4 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)** [REP4-020] was updated. Deadline 6 See response provided at Deadline 6 to Point H7 of this table. End of Examination Position Following the submission **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-010] to address Natural England's comments on this matter at Deadline 6, the Applicants consider this matter closed.	
H9	ANS structures - "up to two" and "maximum capacity" suggest that fewer than two offshore ANS, each with fewer than 2,250 nesting spaces, may be considered. One offshore ANS will likely be insufficient to compensate for the impacts of the projects. We are also concerned that 4,500 nest spaces may not be sufficient to compensate for the combined impacts of the DBS projects and ODOW given the scale of DBS's impacts. The maximum provision should be revisited following any updated assessments.	February 27th Submission No change. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated KCP will be submitted at Deadline 4 and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No Change. Natural England acknowledge the changes made to the ANS design and refer to our comments in Appendix H5 for further detail. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No Change. Whilst we welcome the Applicant's acknowledgement of Natural England's position on the scale and success of the compensation measure in the KCP [REP6-010], we note that the Applicant has removed their statement that 'the ANS topside design will accommodate the required number of	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] RR-039: H 0.1.5. *'Predicted kittiwake impacts and scale of compensation are unaffected by Natural England's comments on the ornithology assessment as revisions only affect displacement impacts, not collisions. Updates for demographic rates and reference populations) have no bearing on the collision risk modelling (CRM). The overall compensation quantum required to offset the predicted impacts of the Projects would therefore be 534 to 972 kittiwake pairs per annum (upper 95% CI 972 to 1,920 kittiwake pairs per annum).* *While the Applicants ornithological assessment as submitted and referred to in the **Kittiwake Compensation Plan** [APP-052] was fit for purpose and followed the appropriate guidance at the point of submission, the reassessment was undertaken at Natural England's request, updating the numbers in line with new guidance (to be provided in the **Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update** [document reference 12.6]) in mid-November 2024. The Applicants do not expect the numbers for kittiwake to change at all, thus, the scale of compensation proposed will not be impacted. The design capacity (number of nesting spaces) to be provided by respective project-led and collaborative structures will be confirmed following the finalisation of commercial agreements between the Applicants and collaborative developer(s) and the completion of the Applicants' topside design concept study which is ongoing. The detailed topside design process will ensure that sufficient nesting spaces are provided. Updates will be provided on the concept design via updates to the **Kittiwake Compensation Plan** [APP-052] later in the Examination process (anticipated to be by March/April 2025).* *The Applicants maintain that two offshore ANS is sufficient to compensate for the predicted impacts of the Projects. This aligns with the delivery options outlined in the **Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-053] which supports the construction of two offshore ANS. This approach has been approved by the Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan Steering Group, which includes Natural England. This is evidenced in the Steering Group Agreement Log (Table 4.1 of the **Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan** [APP-053]) in which Natural England confirmed agreement that two structures are the preferred delivery approach. Furthermore, the Applicants presented their approach to delivering two offshore ANS (whether project-led, collaborative or strategic) during the expert topic group (ETG) meeting on 25th April 2024 which was attended by Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		nesting spaces, regardless of the final compensation requirement figure'. We understand from the updates to [REP6-010] and discussions with the Applicant that the current ANS designs are intended to be sufficient to compensate for impacts up to a 2:1 ratio, but were the Secretary of State to seek provision at a higher ratio, this would present challenges.	*Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB). During this meeting the Applicants received confirmation that the delivery of two ANS would be sufficient (as recorded in the meeting minutes).* *There is no ecological evidence that has been made available to the Applicants to suggest that two ANS, if suitably designed to accommodate sufficient nesting spaces would not be the most appropriate compensatory delivery arrangement.* *The methods for kittiwake compensation calculation employed by the Applicants aligns closely to that of Hornsea 4 which progressed with a compensation ratio of a minimum of 2:1. Furthermore it is established that ratios can be applied to account for risk associated with the success of compensation measures. A considerable amount of risk will be offset for the Projects by the implementation of multiple ANS in separate locations. Therefore, a compensation ratio of 2:1 is considered to be appropriate and will be advanced by the Applicants.'* Deadline 3 See response provided at Deadline in H8 above. Deadline 4 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)** [REP4-020] was updated. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H15): *'Please refer to updates to **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP4-020] (to be submitted at Deadline 6) for details regarding the upper limit of nesting spaces on the Applicants offshore ANS. The upper limit capacity was discussed with Natural England at a meeting with the Applicants on 28th May 2025.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants direct Natural England and the ExA to **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [document reference 6.2.2] submitted at Deadline 7 which presents the latest updates regarding kittiwake compensation at that time of writing. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England on 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the updated **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [document reference 6.2.2] was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H10	The Applicants preferred delivery approach is via a collaborative agreement. We agree that this could be an appropriate route but note that there	February 27th Submission	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] RR-039: H 0.1.11:	

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	remains a lack of clarity on how the ANS would be delivered.	Issue progressed. Clarification has been provided that the Applicants and ODOW will each progress one project-led offshore ANS. The two projects are also exploring the potential for nesting space to be shared to present reciprocal resilience across the compensation measure via an MOU, therefore delivering the strategic measure and approach in line with the KSCP, collaboratively through the installation of individual project-led ANS. However, at this stage it remains unclear whether a single ANS will be sufficient for the requirements of the Applicants. Please see Appendix H2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated KCP will be submitted at Deadline 4 and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. Natural England welcomes that an MOU has now been signed between the Applicant and ODOW. Nevertheless we remain concerned that, in the event of ODOW not progressing, the provision of a single project-led ANS will significantly increase the risk of insufficient compensation being provided. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*'The Applicants' intention is to progress one project-led offshore ANS, while ODOW intend to progress another offshore ANS, the two projects are exploring the potential for nesting space to be shared to present reciprocal resilience across the compensation measure (an MoU is currently being drafted between the two parties), therefore delivering the strategic measure and approach in line with the KSCP, collaboratively through the installation of individual project-led ANS.* *As stated above, the Applicants are in discussions with other developers in relation to sharing the benefit of HRA compensation for kittiwake on a strategic basis. Discussions have included the potential for the Applicants to take reciprocal shares of compensation benefits in ANS constructed by ODOW and by the Applicants. Should this be taken forward it is noted that ODOW has included for the potential for an ANS within their Development Consent Order application. The Applicants will provide updates on these discussions through the Examination including progress on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (or equivalent) between the Parties by end of January 2025.* *Details of how the collaboration will work in practice will be provided in the updated Kittiwake CIMP [APP-054] and Part 2 (paragraph 4(d)) of Schedule 18 to the* ***Draft DCO*** *[APP-027] provides for collaboration with another party as a potential delivery mechanism for the compensation measures. Updates on delivery will be provided in updates to the* ***Kittiwake Compensation Plan*** *[APP-052] and the* ***Project-Level Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) Site Selection Report*** *[document reference 10.19]. These documents will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005]. Updates on strategic delivery mechanisms will be provided at the appropriate deadline during Examination as details are confirmed.'* Deadline 4 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 3 Documents and Additional Submissions** [REP4-088] (REP3-055:1.8]: *'Under the scenarios presented within Case for* ***Reduction in Kittiwake Breeding Seasons for ANS Installation (Revision 2)*** *[application reference 12.6], the Applicants explain that the ANS may take between 13 and 37 years to deliver full compensation (assuming the colony initially has 20 pairs), or between 19 and 50 years (assuming the colony initially has a single pair). In the event that the ANS is colonised but there is remaining compensation debt after 30 years of operation (the Projects' lifespan); to reduce the risk of compensation deficit the Applicant retains the option to maintain and monitor the ANS beyond the duration of the Projects. This additional responsibility could be implemented as adaptive management, to be reviewed regularly with oversight from the kittiwake Steering Group which will include Natural England and the RSPB as primary members.. This additional commitment to ensuring the success of the offshore ANS provides confidence that the measure will deliver the compensation requirement for the Projects, even if beyond the Projects' operational lifespan. Further details will be provided via updates to the Applicant's* ***Outline Kittiwake Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (CIMP)*** *[APP-054] at Deadline 4.* *The Applicant has engaged with ODOW on their ANS delivery programme and have agreed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a collaboration agreement in relation to the development,*	

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			construction, operation and decommissioning of ANS sites. This document sets out the terms for collaboration, and each Party's commitment to sharing nesting spaces and compensation benefits attached to each occupied space. *It is acknowledged that due to revised timescales for the delivery of the ODOW ANS, there is unlikely to be capacity to deliver a portion of compensation early as a result of collaboration. While early kittiwake compensation through collaborative efforts with ODOW is not currently an option, the Applicants onshore ANS at Gateshead is already implemented and is showing encouraging signs of utilisation by kittiwake. The onshore ANS was constructed in February 2023, a full seven breeding seasons ahead of first possible operation for the Projects.'* <u>Deadline 6 and End of Examination Position</u> The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H16): '*The upper limit capacity was discussed with Natural England alongside the identification of a preferred site for ANS installation at a meeting with the Applicants on 28th May 2025. Distance of the preferred site from Outer Dowsing's offshore ANS has been presented to Natural England and will be provided in updates to the* ***Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)*** *[REP4-020].* *The Applicants are confident that the package of measures being delivered to offset kittiwake impacts (project led offshore ANS, shared reciprocal nesting space on Outer Dowsing's ANS and the Applicants onshore ANS at Gateshead) will provide sufficient ecological resilience. The three ANS structures on which the Applicants have secured nesting space are geographically diverse and host sufficient nesting capacity for the Projects (as outlined in updates to* ***Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)*** *[REP4-020].* *At present the Applicants are not at liberty to provide the details of the 'apportionment arrangements' with Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind (ODOW), as this is covered by a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).'* Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H11	Project-led, collaborative and strategic compensation all being progressed in parallel creates uncertainty in what is being secured and can be expected to be delivered. We highlight that the provision of a single offshore ANS with 2,250 capacity is unlikely to be sufficient to compensate for the predicted impacts of DBS, should delivery of collaborative/strategic measures fall through.	<u>End of Examination Position</u> Project-led, collaborative and strategic compensation all being progressed in parallel creates uncertainty in what is being secured and can be expected to be delivered. We highlight that the provision of a single offshore ANS with 2,250 capacity is unlikely to be sufficient to compensate for the predicted impacts of DBS, should delivery of collaborative/strategic measures fall through.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H11): '*Should the delivery of collaborative / strategic measures fall away, the Applicants will deliver measures that will sufficiently provide the necessary compensation as calculated for the DBS Projects following the* ***Offshore Ornithology EIA Update*** *[document reference 12.5] and* ***Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update*** *[document reference 12.6].* *Further information regarding the proposed location, design and implementation timescales for project led offshore ANS is provided in the updated* ***Kittiwake Compensation Plan*** *[APP-052] and the* ***Project-Level Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) Site Selection Report*** *[document reference 10.19].* *These documents will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005]'.*	

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			Deadline 2 & 4 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP2-010] was updated.	
H12	Our comments on the shortlist of potential locations for the offshore ANS should be considered in any future refinement of the shortlist.	February 27th Submission Issue progressed. Please see Appendix H2 of our Deadline 2 submission for further detail on the shortlist of sites. Deadline 3 No Change. Our Deadline 2 advice still remains, please also see our additional advice outlined in Appendix H3 of our Deadline 3 submission. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated KCP will be submitted at Deadline 4 and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 No change. Natural England welcome the additional information provided by the Applicant on the site refinement process, however it remains unclear how our previous advice has been considered. We refer to Appendix H5 for further detailed comments. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 Issue Progressed. Natural England welcomes the site selection updates included in the KCP [REP6-010] which demonstrate consideration of our previous advice. We will provide comment on the final site selected within our concluding offshore ornithology advice.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H12): '*The Applicants have progressed additional site selection work which considers the presence of ecological and designated sites and features within the boundaries of individual areas of search (AoS). Updates on identifying a suitable location for the placement of offshore ANS are provided in an updated* ***Kittiwake Compensation Plan*** *[APP-052] and the* ***Project-Level Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) Site Selection Report*** *[document reference 10.19]. These documents will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005].'* Deadline 2 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP2-010] was updated. Deadline 3 The Applicants state in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that they '*welcome feedback on the shortlisted ANS areas of search (AoS) outlined in* ***Project Level Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) Site Selection Report*** *[PDB-007]. A buffer of 15km was applied around all offshore wind farms when identifying initial AoS, ensuring that all sites identified conformed with the guidance outlined in the* ***Round 4 Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan*** *[APP-053]. Furthermore, an update on ANS site selection was provided in* ***Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)*** *[REP2-010] at Deadline 2 which outlined the refinement process and presented the final three candidate sites being progressed for site investigation works.'* (See full response in Table 2-14, Row H2-3.3). Deadline 4 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)** [REP4-020] was updated. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H13): '*The Applicants met with Natural England on 28th May 2025 to present their final preferred candidate site for the delivery of offshore ANS. Updates to* ***Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 5)*** *[REP4-020] at Deadline 6 present the Applicants preferred site (Site 6a). It is the Applicants hope that the selection of Site 6a will allay Natural England's concerns regarding the potential for increased collisions as a result of proximity of the ANS colony to the Projects and the Hornsea projects.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			The Applicants have considered the location of key foraging areas for FFC SPA kittiwake to maximise the chances of success for the ANS colony, as well as reduce competition with the existing population. Predictive modelling informed by seabird tracking from FFC SPA (Cleasby et al., 2020; Wakefield et al., 2017) was utilised by NIRAS when developing ecological suitability scores (see Appendix D of ***Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan*** *[APP-053]) that have been used by the Applicants as a guidance tool to support the site selection process. Further to this, when assessing site suitability, the Applicants followed principles set out in Appendix D of* ***Kittiwake Strategic Compensation Plan*** *[APP-053] that the offshore ANS should ideally be 55km to 100km from the FFC colony to avoid the core foraging range for FFC SPA kittiwake, while maintaining connectivity to allow colony interchange. The Applicants have also reviewed data from the Royal Society of the Protection for Birds (RSPB) (2017) as part of the site selection process and have sought to avoid areas with the highest utilisation distribution, though acknowledge limitations of this data which include a limited sample size, and data bias due to battery capability of the trackers. Site 6a is in excess of 60km from FFC SPA kittiwake colony and as such, the Applicants can assert that they have sufficiently considered the possibility of competition for resources.'* End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position detailed at Deadline 6. The Applicants note that in a call held with Natural England 1st July 2025, Natural England confirmed that their review of the final potential location of the kittiwake ANS structure was ongoing. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on this matter in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H13	The ANS should be provided at least four breeding seasons before the projects are operational.	February 27th Submission Issue resolved. The KCP has been updated to remove the area of overlap with NNSSR SAC from consideration, which is welcomed. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England disagree with the Applicants proposed reduction to 2 breeding seasons and maintain our advice provided at Relevant Representations [AS-048]. Please see Appendix H3 of our Deadline 3 submission for further information required to support the proposal. Deadline 4 The Applicant has acknowledged our advice [see REP3-028], but has not provided any new	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 0.1.6). 'Draft Defra guidance (Defra, 2021) states that compensation should ideally be in place, functioning and contributing to the coherence of the UK national site network prior to any impact occurring, which in this case is at the start of OWF operation. A proportion of kittiwake breed at three years old (Coulson, 2011), meaning that implementation of compensation measures three breeding seasons in advance of operation would allow sufficient time for recruitment of juveniles to the adult population. A staggered approach to the implementation of two offshore ANS is considered acceptable for the Round 4 Plan. This may allow delivery of a single offshore ANS four years in advance of operation of the Projects, dependent on the progression of collaborative efforts with other OWF developers whose projects are at a more advanced stage. The Applicants are continuing to consider their position with respect to project-led and collaborative compensation delivery timescales in light of ongoing discussions with other OWF developers and emerging evidence related to the impacts resulting from a short compensation delay. The Applicants continue to review and consider the timescales for the delivery of offshore ANS by other projects. The Applicants note that Hornsea Projects 3 and 4 have recently received approval of a non-material change (NMC) regarding the requirement to implement their ANS four breeding seasons ahead of	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		information. Natural England maintains our advice provided at Relevant Representations and Deadline 3. Deadline 5 No Change. Natural England maintain our previous advice. Please see Appendix H5 for further details. Deadline 6 Notwithstanding requests made in our Deadline 4 advice [REP4-125] for further clarity on certain aspects of the modelling methodology in relation to the Applicant's case for a reduced number of breeding seasons, Natural England are in agreement with the Applicant that that there would be little merit in further discussion between our parties on this topic within the remainder of Examination, and that we maintain our respective positions. Please see Appendix H6 for further detail. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	operation, to reduce to two breeding seasons, upon the provision of evidence that new colonies would reach the accumulated mortality impact for the respective projects. Further details on the implementation programme are provided in the updated **Kittiwake Compensation Plan** [APP-052] and the **Project-Level Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) Site Selection Report** [PDB-007]**.** These documents will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005].' Deadline 2 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP2-010] was updated. Deadline 4 See response provided at Deadline 4 in Point H6 of this table. Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-076: 2): '*The Applicants welcome Natural England's understanding regarding the logistical and technical challenges associated with delivering offshore structures. While this is the case, the Applicants maintain their position that the delivery of the offshore Artificial Nesting Structures (ANS) two years in advance of the Projects becoming operational, as opposed to three or four years does not impact the ability of this measure to deliver the required compensation requirement over the lifespan of the structure (see* ***Case for Reduction in Kittiwake Breeding Seasons for ANS Installation*** *[REP4-083]). The Applicants are providing a suite of measures to compensate for impacts on kittiwake which include the installation of an onshore ANS at Gateshead in 2023, in addition to the project led ANS and reciprocal shared nesting space on Outer Dowsing's ANS. The onshore ANS was installed a minimum of seven kittiwake breeding seasons in advance of any predicted impacts for the Projects. This combined with the delivery of nesting spaces across two offshore sites provides comfort that the Applicants have every intention of the compensation measures being in place and delivering at the point of impact.*' Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H14	The potential impacts of ANS implementation within NNSSR SAC should be considered and if this option is to be retained, information to inform an Appropriate Assessment provided.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The KCP has been updated to remove the area of overlap with NNSSR SAC from consideration, which is welcomed.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] RR-039: H 12.	
H15	The Applicants should update the predicted impacts of all submitted Offshore Wind Farm applications prior to the end of Examination.	February 27th Submission	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H16): *'Updates on compensation impact will be provided by the Applicants in mid-November following ornithology HRA updates addressing comments raised in Relevant Representations in the following*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Issue progressed. Whilst updates have been made to the in-combination assessment, further update will likely be needed. See Appendix G2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & 6 No change. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Natural England are satisfied with the updated in-combination assessments provided by the Applicant (see Sheet G, G41). Whilst the DBD PEIR is now in the public domain through a Section 42 consultation, we consider it would not be proportionate to update the in-combination assessment before the close of the Examination. Therefore we advise that when determining DBS windfarms the Secretary of State considers Dogger Bank D in their HRA.	*document:* ***Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update*** *[document reference 12.6]. These changes will be reflected in the* ***Kittiwake Compensation Plan*** *[APP-052] at the appropriate Deadline following this.'* Deadline 2 & 4 **Appendix 1 - Project Level Kittiwake Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP2-010] was updated. End of Examination Position The Applicants agree that it would not be proportionate to update the in-combination assessment before the close of the Examination to information presented in the DBD PEIR. Consideration of the DBD PEIR has been presented in **The Applicant's Consideration of the Dogger Bank D Preliminary Environmental Information Report** [REP7-133] submitted at Deadline 7.	
H16	A full colony count of kittiwake numbers at FFC SPA has not been undertaken since the majority of the recent HPAI outbreaks took place. We welcome the Applicants comment that ongoing monitoring will provide valuable evidence in this respect.	End of Examination Position The Applicant has suggested that evidence does not appear to indicate that kittiwake populations in the southern North Sea have been significantly affected by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). However, a full colony count of kittiwake numbers at FFC SPA has not been undertaken since the majority of the recent HPAI outbreaks took place. We welcome the Applicant's comment that ongoing monitoring will provide valuable evidence in this respect.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H17): '*The Applicants acknowledge this comment and agree that monitoring at FFC SPA is challenging. It is of note however that the colony to the south in Lowestoft has shown very little change in numbers and there were very few observations of apparent HPAI casualties*.'	
Document used: 6.2.1.2 Outline Kittiwake Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan				
H17	We recognise the current uncertainty around the implementation of strategic kittiwake compensation and whether the KCIMP is therefore	February 27th Submission	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] RR-039: H 0.1.8.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	needed, we consider that should confirmation be provided by DESNZ, we would expect a populated KCIMP to be submitted into the Examination.	Following the publication of the Ministerial Statement confirming that offshore ANS should be delivered at a project level, we advise that a populated KCIMP should be submitted into the Examination. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England welcome the Examiner's agreement that a populated KCIMP should be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 4. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment following review of the KCIMP that will be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 4. Deadline 5 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcomes the provision of the updated KCIMP, however depending on resolution of other issues, it could be beneficial to provide a further update before the close of the Examination. Please see Appendix H5 for further details.	Deadline 3 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (H2 -2.2). Deadline 4 **Outline Kittiwake Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)** [REP4-022] was updated. Deadline 6 The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement on this matter.	
Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Document Used: 6.2.2 Appendix 2 Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan				
H18	Provide an in-combination assessment of impacts on guillemot at the Farne Islands SPA and consider the need for compensation for these impacts.	February 27th Submission No Change. Natural England welcome the Examiner's agreement that a populated KCIMP should be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 4. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated assessment will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [PDB-006] (RR-039: G4). Deadline 3 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] R&I ref: G51). Deadline 4 The Applicants confirm the latest revisions to the PVA were issued at Deadline 4 as part of the following submissions: • **Appendix 12-13 - Population Viability Analyses (Revision 2)** [REP4-034]; • **Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology (Revision 3)** [REP4-032]; and • **Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Part 4 of 4 – Marine Ornithological Features (Revision 4)** [REP4-016]. Deadline 6	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 5 No Change. Natural England maintain our previous advice that the Applicant include consideration of compensation requirements for guillemot at the Farne Islands SPA. Deadline 6 No change. We understand the Applicant is updating the GRCP to include consideration of impacts to guillemot at the Farne Islands SPA. This is welcome and we will provide further comment once it is submitted into Examination. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. Impacts to Farne Islands guillemot have been included on a without prejudice basis in the Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Plan (Revision 6) [REP6-013] submitted at Deadline 6.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H3). Deadline 7 The Applicants confirm that an updated version of **Appendix 2 – Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-012] was submitted at Deadline 6. This updated report, despite the Applicants remaining of the conclusion that displacement from the Projects does not represent an adverse effect on integrity of the Farne Islands Special Protected Area (SPA), included without prejudice compensation proposals for guillemot from the Farne Islands SPA. End of Examination Position The Applicants remaining of the conclusion that displacement from the Projects does not represent an adverse effect on integrity of the Farne Islands SPA.	
H19	The most recent count for razorbill at FFC SPA is the 2022 count of 45,780 individuals, which when corrected according to standard methodology gives 61,345 individuals (Clarkson et al 20223). The GRCP is updated as currently uses the count from 2017.	February 27th Submission & End of Examination Position Issue resolved. The GRCP has been updated with the most recent count data.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 21).	
H20	The GRCP should be updated following any reassessments undertaken in response to the advice provided in Appendix G. Compensation metrics should be presented in line with both the Applicants preferred method for calculating impacts and SNCB guidance.	February 27th Submission Issue progressed. Significant efforts have been made to provide assessment values in line with SNCB advice and the compensation plans have been updated accordingly. However, due to outstanding concerns with respect to in-combination assessments and PVAs, we remain unable to comment on the conclusions and impact values presented at this time. Please refer to Appendix G2 for further detail. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 22). Deadline 2 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (H2 -2.2). Deadline 4 The Applicants confirm that **Appendix 2 - Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 4)** [REP4-024] and **Annex A - Outline Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)** [REP4-027] were submitted. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H2).	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No Change. Natural England welcome that the Applicant's updated ornithology assessment and an updated Auk Compensation Plan will be submitted at Deadline 4 (as stated in their response to the Deadline 2 documents [REP3-028]) and will provide comment at Deadline 5. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. We welcome the Applicant's updated calculations. However there are currently outstanding queries with the razorbill assessment. Please see Appendix H5 for further details. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 &End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcome the Applicant's clarification provided in [REP6-052] and the updated calculations for razorbill in the GRCP [REP6-013].	End of Examination Position The Applicants consider this matter to be closed following clarification issued in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H2) and submission of **Appendix 2 - Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-012] at Deadline 6.	
H21	Provide further detail on the methods used to calculate compensation requirements for guillemot and razorbill, and on the rationale behind the choice of method.	February 27th Submission No Change. Natural England provided further guidance on this matter in Appendix H1 of our Deadline 1 submission [REP1-065]. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England have provided further guidance on this matter in Appendix G4 of our Deadline 4 submission. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. We welcome the Applicants updated calculations. However there are currently outstanding queries around how the Applicant came	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 23). Deadline 3 The Applicants direct Natural England to the response provided in **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (H2 - 3.2). Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses on compensation quantum provided in Table 2-22 and Table 2-23 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider this matter to be closed following clarification issued in Table 2-22 and Table 2-23 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] and submission of **Appendix 2 - Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-012] at Deadline 6.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		to these values. Please see Appendix H5 for further details. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7&End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcome the Applicant's clarification provided in [REP6-052] and the updated calculations for razorbill in the GRCP [REP6-013].		
H22	Compensation requirements have only been provided for guillemot and razorbill using compensation ratios of 1:1 and 2:1, and only for a limited range of mortality and displacement rates using the Applicants preferred approach. We cannot advise on an appropriate compensation ratio until further details of the compensation measures are provided, however we note that the predicted requirements already appear substantial and will be challenging to deliver. Further discussion will be needed on the scale of compensation required once the impact assessments have been updated.	February 27th Submission No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. Please refer to Appendix G4 for detailed comments. Deadline 5 Issue Progressed. Natural England welcome the Applicant including a compensation ratio of 3:1 in [REP4-027] for guillemot and razorbill. However there are errors in the calculations which need to be resolved in order to provide full comments. Deadline 6 No change. We understand the Applicant is updating the compensation calculations, which is welcomed. Natural England will provide comments once submitted into Examination. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position Issue Resolved. Natural England welcome the Applicant's clarification provided in [REP6-052] and	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 24). Deadline 3 **Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Site Refinement Report (Redacted) (Revision 2)** [REP3-019] was submitted. Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the responses on compensation quantum provided in Table 2-22 and Table 2-23 of **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052]. Deadline 7 The Applicants confirm that an updated version of **Appendix 2 - Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-012] was submitted at Deadline 6. End of Examination Position The Applicants consider this matter to be closed following clarification issued in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-059:H2) and submission of **Appendix 2 - Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-012] at Deadline 6.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		the updated calculations for razorbill in the GRCP [REP6-013].		
H23	Several locations included have previously been ruled out by other projects (e.g. Hornsea Four). We consider there is a significant risk that all sites on the shortlist will be deemed unsuitable for compensation. Feasibility assessments for the shortlisted sites are needed as a matter of urgency to enable other sites to be explored should these prove unsuitable.	<u>February 27th Submission</u> Issue progressed. Natural England provided comment on the Site Refinement Report in our Rule 17 response dated 16th December 2024 [AS-008]. We acknowledge the Applicants have planned further surveys for Q1 2025, and that results will be presented at Deadline 3. Please refer to Appendix H2 for further detail. <u>Deadline 3</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 4</u> Issue progressed. NE welcome the recent survey work undertaken, albeit this indicates Middle Mouse does not support rats. Worm's Head is now the sole project-led site. We advise that the views of NRW on the feasibility of this location are sought. Given the scale of potential impacts the Applicant's auk compensation will be dependent on strategic delivery on the Isles of Scilly, so we welcome the Applicant's engagement with the initiative. Please see Appendix H4 for detailed comments and H24 below. <u>Deadline 5</u> No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. <u>Deadline 6</u> No change. It has been confirmed in the updated GRCP [REP5-012] that Worms Head is no longer in scope. Natural England retains its concerns about Middle Mouse as rat presence has not yet been confirmed and it is likely too small to compensate for the impacts of the Project alone. The Applicant has begun investigating locations in Scotland for project-led compensation, however progress within	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 26): '*The Applicants undertook an extensive feasibility surveys campaign over the 2024 breeding season to refine the shortlist provided. These comprised of colony surveys at nine locations where an assessment of the numbers of birds, likelihood or predator presence and the availability of additional nesting habitat was assessed. This was carried out in parallel with landowner consultation regarding both the presence of rats and the appetite for predator eradication schemes. From this the Applicants have identified locations where predator eradication schemes could be delivered that would provide the number of rat free nesting spaces required for the predicted numbers required for compensation. Further details on site selection are provided in the* ***Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Site Shortlist Refinement Report*** *[document reference 10.20] and updated* ***Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan*** *[APP-056] which will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005].* *Detailed pre-eradication surveys, which include an assessment of the abundance and distribution of rats, will be undertaken during Examination and reported at the appropriate Deadline following this*'. <u>Deadline 3</u> **Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Site Refinement Report (Redacted) (Revision 2)** [REP3-019] was submitted. <u>Deadline 5</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: H23): '*See the Applicants' response to REP4-125: H1.3.1 – H1.3.3 in Table 2-24 of this document. The Applicants also note that the* ***Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 5)*** *[document reference 6.2.2] has been submitted at Deadline 5 to reflect the latest status of auk compensation measures for the Projects.*' <u>Deadline 7 and End of Examination Position</u> As stated in **The Applicants' Response to Deadline 6 Documents** [REP7-131] (REP6-076: 1): '*The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comments in relation to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) interim guidance on the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) and their concerns over the progress of a project-led option during Examination. The Applicants highlight that the following statement was jointly agreed by Defra, DESNZ, Natural England, The Wildlife Trusts, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), The Crown Estate and the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC) issued in March 2025 regarding the progress made on the Isles of Scilly strategic predator eradication scheme. Considering this being agreed by DESNZ, the Applicants consider this does to some extent update and supersede this guidance and have asked for clarity on this matter from DESNZ.*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Examination timeframes is likely to be limited. Please refer to Appendix H6 for further detail. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	*"The Isles of Scilly Seabird Recovery Partnership is developing a predator eradication project to recover seabird populations on the Isles of Scilly (IoS) as a strategic compensation measure in relation to offshore wind development. This partnership is led by Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, and closely involves the Duchy of Cornwall, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and a range of other local and national partners.* *The partnership, with support from The Wildlife Trusts, is developing a predator eradication programme on the Isles of Scilly to cover a 30 year period. This programme will include an operational plan to remove predators from the islands, a long-term maintenance/biosecurity plan to ensure the islands remain predator free, a community engagement plan and a monitoring and evidence plan. It is expected the outputs of this work will be delivered Spring 2027, with the potential delivery of the eradication programme to follow. It is envisaged that this will be one of the first fully developed and costed programmes to be established as a strategic compensation measure for offshore wind farm impacts on protected seabirds.* *Currently, Defra is establishing the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF), to develop strategic compensation measures, which is anticipated to be fully operational by late 2025. A number of organisations have recently met, including Defra, DESNZ, Natural England, The Wildlife Trusts, OWIC, The Crown Estate, and RSPB, to establish a Task and Finish Group to establish the mechanisms required to allow predator eradication to be delivered as a strategic compensation measure, noting the option for this to delivered by the Marine Recovery Fund.* *All parties agree that predator eradication on the Isles of Scilly has great potential to provide compensation for the impacts of offshore wind projects and would support its inclusion in project specific compensation plans. Offshore wind projects currently seeking consent might wish to submit this statement to the examining authority to demonstrate progress with this scheme, if they seek to use it as strategic compensation for unavoidable impacts to protected species likely to be impacted by their projects."* *The Applicants have made multiple attempts to engage NatureScot regarding the potential use of Scottish locations as compensation sites and are awaiting response.* *The Applicants are currently progressing surveys at multiple locations and anticipate having preliminary results to present prior to the end of Examination.'* Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H24	Feasibility assessments for the shortlisted sites are needed as a matter of urgency to confirm the presence of predators and suitable auk nesting habitat and to determine the scale of compensation that could be achieved.	February 27th Submission Issue progressed. Natural England provided comment on the Site Refinement Report in our Rule 17 response dated 16th December 2024 [AS-008]. We acknowledge the Applicants have planned further surveys for Q1 2025, and that results will be presented at Deadline 3. Please refer to Appendix H2 for further detail.	The Applicants direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 28: *'As stated in RR-039: H 26 feasibility studies, including colony surveys, were undertaken by the Applicants during the 2024 breeding season. From this the Applicants have identified locations where predator eradications schemes could be delivered that would provide the number of rat free nesting spaces required for the predicted numbers required for compensation. Further details on location and potential scale of compensation are provided in the **Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Site Shortlist Refinement Report** [document reference 10.20] and updated **Guillemot [and Razorbill]***	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 Issue Progressed. The recent survey work undertaken has confirmed rat presence at Worm's Head, however further surveys are needed to confirm rats can access areas utilised by guillemot and that physical implementation of the measure is achievable. The advice of NRW regarding the feasibility of measures at this site should be sought. We also have some outstanding concerns regarding how the scale of compensation has been calculated. Please refer to Appendix H4 for detailed comments. Deadline 5 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 6 No change. See H 23 Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	***Compensation Plan*** *[APP-056] which will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005].* *Updates on the scale of compensation will be provided by the Applicants in mid-November 2024 following ornithology HRA updates addressing comments raised in Relevant Representations in the* ***Offshore Ornithology RIAA HRA Update*** *[document reference 12.6]. The sites identified in the* ***Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Site Shortlist Refinement Report*** *[document reference 10.20] are considered to have sufficient capacity to accommodate additional compensation requirement.'* Deadline 3 The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] (Table 2-14, Row H2-4.1) that they ' *have undertaken surveys at both Worms Head and Middle Mouse in January and February 2025 respectively. Surveys at Worms Head have enabled an estimation of the suitable available habitat, which is presented in a redacted form the* ***Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Site Shortlist Refinement Report (Revision 2)*** *[document reference: 10.20] to be submitted at Deadline 3, with a non-redacted version provided to Natural England. The surveys at Worms Head also confirmed the presence of rats at the site, which was corroborated by the National Trust during subsequent consultation on 21st February 2025. The surveys at Middle Mouse were inconclusive and further surveys will be required to confirm the presence of rats at this location. The availability of habitat at this site remains unchanged from that presented in the* ***Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Site Shortlist Refinement Report [PDB-008].*** *Further surveys are proposed to be undertaken during the auk breeding season May/June 2025, to gather additional evidence on the impacts that predators are having on guillemot and razorbill.* *The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's positive feedback regarding the Isles of Scilly and are continuing to work with Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC) to develop a strategic solution at this location as detailed in the Applicants' Responses to the ExQ1 [document reference: 13.2], OR.1.30. The Applicants note that, in a statement sent by Defra to the relevant developers on 13th March 2025, Natural England are included in the list of organisations involved in the Task and Finish Group to establish the mechanisms required to allow predator eradication to be delivered as a strategic compensation measure, noting the option for this to delivered by the MRF.'* Deadline 5 As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 4 Documents** [REP5-037] (REP4-129: H24): *'Unfortunately, from the 9th May 2025 Worms Head is no longer an option that is available to the Applicants as a potential project-led compensation site. Therefore, no response is required. However, the Applicants note Natural England's comments and will be cognizant of these in developing another compensation at another site.'* Deadline 7 See response provided at Deadline 7 in Point H23 of this table.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
			End of Examination Position The Applicants maintain the position outlined at Deadline 7 in Point H23 of this table. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H25	Consideration should be given to connectivity of the predator eradication/control locations with guillemot and razorbill populations of the impacted SPA when refining the shortlisted sites. Given connectivity is likely to be low at best, an assessment of connectivity with the national site network for these species should also be presented.	February 27th Submission Issue Progressed. A connectivity assessment has been provided in Revision 3 of the GRCP. Whilst it will be limited, there is potential for some connectivity with the National Site Network. Please refer to Appendix H2 for further detail. Deadline 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline.	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 29): '*The approach being taken by the Applicants is aligned with the hierarchy within the Defra guidance, whereby compensation was considered first within the affected site. However, as was discussed in the ETG meeting on 10th April 2024, there is no opportunity for provision of compensation for guillemot or razorbill within the Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA. Therefore, the Applicants have expanded the compensation site selection to provide measures that benefit the same feature outside the affected site. The Applicants are factoring in connectivity and coherence of NSN, amongst a range of other factors, as part of site consideration.*' **Deadline 3 and End of Examination Position** The Applicants state in the **Applicants' Responses to Deadline 2 Documents** [REP3-028] that they '*propose that compensation ratios should be applied to address uncertainty that the proposed measure (e.g. rat eradication) will deliver its projected outcomes (increased population and productivity) and not on the basis of where those additional hatched birds recruit as breeding adults. Since the auk displacement assessment already contains several independent, additive, sources of precaution (over-estimates of displacement rate (70%), mortality rate (>=2%), assumption that all birds in breeding season are breeders at FFC SPA, assumption that 70% of post-breeding birds are from FFC SPA, density independent PVA projections), the Applicants consider that no further compensation ratio should be applied as the 1:1 estimate is already highly precautionary.* *The Applicants welcome Natural England's acknowledgement that compensation on the Isles of Scilly will contribute directly to the National Site Network.*' (See full response in Table 2-13, Row H2-4.3) Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H26	Beginning eradication prior to the first turbine being installed - eradication may take longer than the two years allocated, and the compensation will not be delivering until the required number of chicks are being produced and have reached age of first breeding (i.e. recruited into the breeding population). We do not consider implementation before impact to be analogous to delivering compensation before impact.	February 27th Submission No Change. Deadline 3 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 4 No Change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 5 & 6	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 30): '*The Applicants propose to initiate the predator eradication two years prior to installation of the first turbine. While we acknowledge that this does not allow for adults lost from the population to be replaced, it is a practical approach that will enable productivity to increase prior to any impact.* *Defra (2021) guidance states "A protected feature should not be impacted before compensation is secured. Ideally, measures should be in place, functioning and contributing to the network before development begins. Defra recognises that in some cases and for certain habitats and species this could take several years and therefore it may not be feasible for the compensatory measures to be complete before the impact takes place. Where this is not possible, it is important that necessary licences are in place, finances are secured, and realistic implementation plans have been agreed with the appropriate*	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		No Change. Natural England maintains our previous advice. Deadline 7 & End of Examination Position The Applicant's Responses to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] states that they maintain their intent to implement predator eradication two years in advance of turbine installation. Natural England maintain our concerns that it may take longer than two years to complete an eradication and that implementation before impact is not analogous to delivering compensation before impact.	*bodies to demonstrate that the compensatory measure is secured."Therefore, the Applicants consider that the compensation can be adequately secured in line with the Defra guidance.* *Furthermore, the Applicants note that there is no precedent within OWF consenting, for the implementation of compensation up to six years in advance, which is what is being suggested.'* Deadline 6 and End of Examination Position As stated in **The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 5 Documents** [REP6-052] (REP5-061:H26): *'The Applicants acknowledge that if the purpose of the compensation is to replace adults impacted by the Projects with the equivalent number of adult birds then this is not achieved at the point when the measure is implemented. However, this is considered an impractical approach which is likely to require a decade or more to achieve. The Applicants consider that delivery of the compensation should be at the point when the management activity commences with monitoring and adaptive management plans in place to ensure that the overall compensation requirement is achieved. The Applicants have proposed implementation of predator eradication two years in advance of turbine installation, as this is the length of time required to declare an area predator-free (assuming successful eradication). It is up to the Secretary of State to decide whether that is appropriate and whether the application of a ratio to the compensation requirement is necessary to account for uncertainty or overcompensation. Hornsea Project 4 is the first consented OWF to propose predator eradication as compensation for guillemot, and was consented based on the implementation of predator eradication two years prior to impact (Orsted, 2025).'* Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	
H27	There remains a significant amount of work to be done before a location or locations can be selected, and we would have expected much of this to have been done prior to the point of application, as has been done on other projects.	N/A	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 31): *'The Applicants have undertaken a significant amount of work with regards to the shortlisted locations (please see response to RR-039: Ho.2.1). Further details on location and scale of potential compensation are provided in the **Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Site Shortlist Refinement Report** [document reference 10.20] and the updated **Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan** [APP-056] which will be submitted on 29 October 2024 with the Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Rule 9 and 17 letter dated 22 October 2024 [PD-005]'.*	
H28	We agree that exploring the potential of ANS provision as a compensatory measure for guillemot and razorbill has potential as adaptive management should monitoring prove it to be effective.	N/A	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 32): *'The Applicants acknowledge this comment. The Applicants consider that in the absence of evidence regarding the use of ANS by auks any information that can be obtained from the Hornsea 3 structures is of value, regardless of the lack of specific design features.'*	
H29	We welcome commitment to implementing bycatch reduction measures as a compensatory measure if "robust evidence demonstrating the	N/A	The Applicants acknowledge this comment.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	effectiveness of techniques to reduce the bycatch of auks became available." If and when this is available, this may be a suitable adaptive management measure.			
Document Used: 6.2.2.1 Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan				
H30	A more detailed GRCIMP should be provided as soon as possible within the Examination process.	February 27th Submission Following the publication of the Ministerial Statement confirming that predator eradication should be progressed initially at a project level, we advise that a populated CIMP should be submitted into the Examination. Deadline 3 No Change. Natural England welcome the Examiner's agreement that a populated KCIMP should be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 4. Deadline 4 No Change. Natural England will provide further comment following review of the GRCIMP that will be submitted into the Examination at Deadline 4. Deadline 5 Issue progressed. Natural England welcome the provision of additional detail in the Outline GRCIMP [REP4-027], particularly the inclusion of seabird monitoring. However, we note that the Applicant has yet to identify a suitable site or eradication plan. Deadline 6 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. Deadline 7 No change - no new information relevant to this issue has been submitted at this deadline. The Applicant's Responses to Deadline 5 Documents [REP6-052] directs Natural England to the Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6) [REP6-013],	The Applicants acknowledge this comment and also direct Natural England to the response stated in the **Response to Natural England's Relevant Representations** [AS-048] (RR-039: H 35): *'Implementation and monitoring of the predator eradication will be location specific therefore the **Outline Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan** [APP-057] will be updated as appropriate during examination when the pre-eradication studies have provided sufficient location specific information. Furthermore, the Applicants are aware of the current development of innovative monitoring methods that may be suitable for inclusion within the monitoring plan should they prove effective. This document will be developed in detail post-consent with oversight from the Guillemot [and Razorbill] Steering Group as secured through Part 3 of Schedule 18 to **the Draft Development Consent Order** [APP-027].'* Deadline 6 The Applicants direct Natural England to the updated **Appendix 2 - Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Plan (Revision 6)** [REP6-012] submitted at Deadline 6. End of Examination Position As noted in the Applicants initial response on this matter, the **Outline Guillemot [and Razorbill] Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Revision 2)** [REP4-026] will be developed in detail post-consent with oversight from the Guillemot [and Razorbill] Steering Group as secured through Part 3 of Schedule 18 to the Draft Development Consent Order [APP-027]. The Applicants note that an updated revision was provided at Deadline 4 of Examination. Discussions on this matter are anticipated to continue post-examination with Natural England.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix H - Offshore Ornithology Compensation	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
		however this does not include any updates to the Outline GRCIMP [REP4-027] submitted at Deadline 4.		

3.10 Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology

Table 3-10 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix I - Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
I1	We advise that the air quality modelling undertaken for assessing impacts from construction traffic be tested against Natural England's thresholds, as detailed in the guidance document NEA001. We have engaged with the Applicants regarding this approach and understand that the Applicants will be updating the assessment following advice provided through our Discretionary Advice Service (DAS). (7.26)	Issue resolved. See Appendix I1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
I2	We advise that potential alternate routes that could be taken by vessels plus size of the vessels is provided - this could be detailed via an outline Port Management Plan. If the operational port is in the Humber Estuary SAC/SPA, provision of a Port Management Plan should be secured in the DCO to be submitted pre construction, taking into account air quality impacts and vessel management. (7.26)	Issue resolved. See Appendix I1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
I3	The outline Code of Construction Practice should be updated to include separation buffers for the use of back-up generators. (7.26)	Issue resolved. See Appendix I1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
I4	Consideration should be given to further survey of 'dry' ponds to determine if they have permanently dried out or if it was an occasional drying event and whether great crested newt (GCN) are present. (7.18)	Issue resolved. See Appendix I1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	
I5	We advise: - Supervision measures relevant to soil management and handling of soils should be held by competent soil specialist and secured in the OLEM. - Soil surveyors should be named with a list of qualifications and experience on the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey submitted as part of the DCO. - Soil handling methods should normally be as specified as in the Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites - A commitment for best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural temporality required for the development to be returned to its original ALC grade - Clarification on the frequency of inspections to be undertaken to ensure soil is being managed in line with the detailed Soil Management Plan.	Issue resolved. See Appendix I1 of Natural England's Deadline 1 submission for further detail.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement.	

Point	Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Dogger Bank South (East and West) Appendix I - Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology	Consultation, actions, progression	The Applicants' Position	RAG Deadline 7
	- Production of the final SMP should be secured within the DCO wording. - The outline SMP should be updated with the recommendations listed here as needed. (7.21)			

4 Summary

17. This SoCG has outlined the consultation that has taken place between the Applicants and Natural England during the pre-application and Examination phases. This SoCG has been updated throughout the Examination and represents the agreed position at Deadline 8 between the Applicants and Natural England.

18. The ExA require this document to be finalised at Deadline 8, however with the submission of updated ES Chapters at Deadline 7, Natural England have not had time to fully review the updated documents. As such, the Applicants direct the ExA to potential further updates on the matters detailed in this document in Natural England's submissions at Deadline 9 of Examination.

5 References

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024). Planning Act 2008: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-examination-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects. [Accessed August 2024].

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